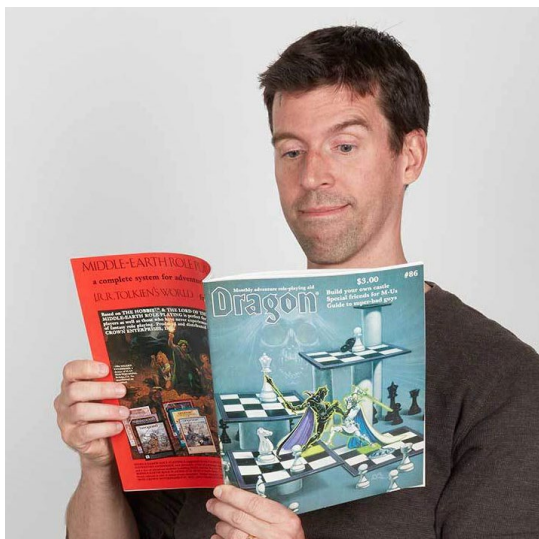




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ISSUE 39



Welcome to Dragon+ Issue 39

While carnival-goers are busy crossing from the Material Plane into the Feywild, we're also interested in animated series characters crossing back into tabletop adventures!



Imagining The Ampersand: Hydro74

This issue's cover artist brings punk energy to the Feywild as he molds a unicorn from digital clay!



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D&D Celebration

Join us on a tour of the hot new products coming soon

2021

Reveling in the release of *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight* and enjoying fey delights in Virtual Play!



Streaming Highlights: D&D Celebration

Rounding up all the action from *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight* launch event!



Character Spotlight: NPCs

Introducing legendary Magic: The Gathering characters Sivitri and Sol'kanar to fifth edition D&D.



D&D x NERDS: Restoring Harmony

The sweet little sparks of the confectionary world join forces with the world's greatest roleplaying game!

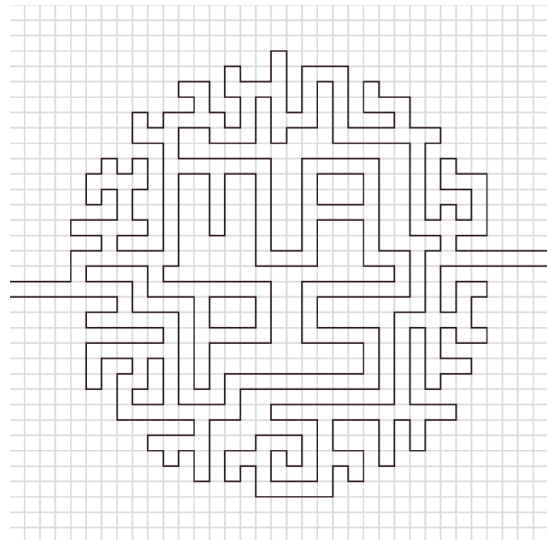
The Best of the Dungeon Masters Guild

This issue we investigate paladin oaths and chat with creator Darren Kenny about his designs for subclasses.



D&D Classics

He wears a winged helm, half a pair of armored pants, and makes his triumphant return in The



Maps (and Art) of the Month

Whether it's the search for a lost mining settlement, a journey

Wild Beyond the Witchlight. Not Strongheart on laundry day—it's Warduke!

through mist-filled domains, or even a pleasant visit to the local carnival—we've got the maps for you!



Community Poll: Dragon Hoard Trinkets

Revealing items that have gained new powers after absorbing the magic of dragons.

Amanda Hamon

Our introduction to members of the D&D Team and their roles continues with the Senior Designer.



Next Issue

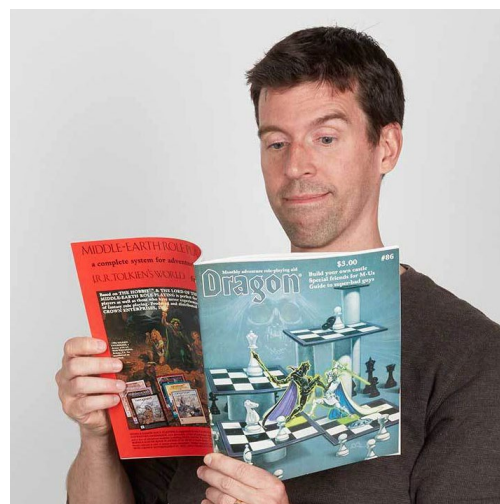
You gain inspiration! Check out our guide to help you roll a natural 20 on your holiday gift giving!

DRAGON+ 39

Welcome to Dragon+ Issue 39

While carnival-goers are busy crossing from the Material Plane into the Feywild, we're also interested in animated series characters crossing back into tabletop adventures!

It's hard to overstate the excitement I felt coming home from school that one September afternoon. It was 1983, and a new *G.I. Joe* mini-series suddenly appeared on TV. What the blue lasers was this? I'd been collecting the 3¾ in. action figures, but hadn't heard about a new cartoon debuting!



Bart Carroll

Still, I excitedly called my friend Steve—who interrupted to tell me he couldn't come over to play because there was this new *G.I. Joe* cartoon on...

Not realizing, we'd apparently lost half the battle.

Back when we had to walk to school uphill both ways in primordial snow, we couldn't record, pause, or watch our shows on-demand. We either watched them live or not at all (and oh, the frustration if an afternoon Cubs game on WGN preempted them!). So when the first commercial break ended and *G.I. Joe* came back on, Steve and I immediately hung up on each other to go watch—and get inspired, no doubt, for new adventures to have with our action figures.

Transmedia brand storytelling (presenting a brand's narrative across

multiple platforms/channels) may not have been a common marketing term back then, but I loved seeing my favorite properties on different platforms. I could watch *Star Wars* on the big screen, read the Marvel comics (even getting spoilers for the upcoming movies when the tie-ins released early), and replay every scene with my action figures. With *G.I. Joe*, the action figures came first—the 3¾ in. line in this case. Support soon followed with a comic masterfully penned by Larry Hama, and a cartoon series starting with 1983’s *The M.A.S.S. Device* (with legendary voice actors Frank Welker and Peter Cullen both involved).

With D&D, I started playing in earnest with the classic “red box” Dungeons & Dragons *Basic Set*. Then in 1983 (a formative year for cartoons in my childhood, apparently), I saw the game come to further life through the *Dungeons & Dragons* animated series. Perhaps considered more appropriate for the format and timeslot, the cartoon’s protagonists (Hank, Sheila, et al) mapped closer to me as a player than to my characters, but still—it was D&D on Saturday mornings! Even better, several characters from the 1980 toy line appeared in a few early episodes—Kelek, Strongheart, and Warduke!

I’m sure I rooted for Warduke’s nefarious plans rather than for the kids to free Dungeon Master. I had Warduke’s action figure after all, along with a handful of others (including the Ogre King, who served as a stand-in for the monstrous gladiator *G.I. Joe*’s Duke fought in *The M.A.S.S. Device*’s second episode). In fact, I still have them.

Years later, a trove of old merchandise was recovered from a former TSR storage facility and drafted around the D&D team. And while I had my eye on a copy of the *AD&D Coloring Album*, scooped up by Jeremy Crawford, he in turn saved me a Shambling Mound action figure from the toy line. (Thanks, Jeremy!)

This issue, we’re celebrating the release of *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight*. Considering it involves a fey-influenced carnival, this ties in nicely with the return of Warduke and the other toy line characters appearing in the ’80s animated series (whose



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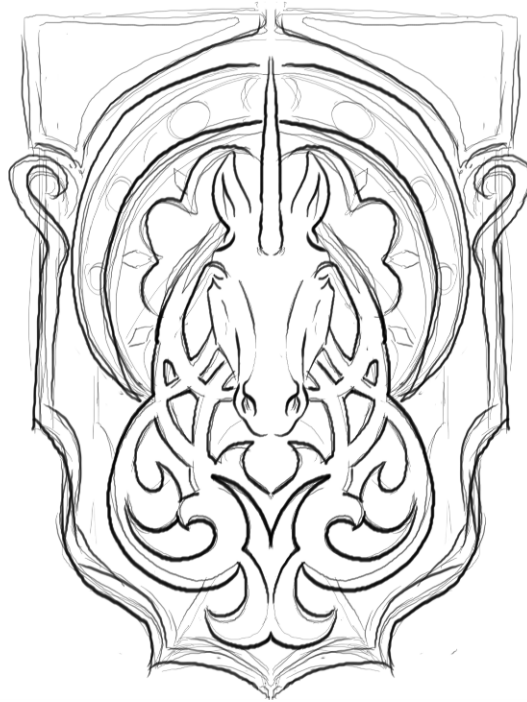
protagonists entered the world of Dungeons & Dragons through an amusement park ride, after all).

We'll also look deeper at the products appearing this fall, including *Fizban's Treasury of Dragons* and *Strixhaven: A Curriculum of Chaos*. There's also

NERDS adventures to explore. And when it comes to badass characters, we'll take a further look back at Warduke and others in his League of Malevolence, as well as more crossover characters from *Magic: The Gathering's* earlier sets.

All this, plus more maps for your games, the latest tour through the DMs Guild, and a look at what else might be hidden within a dragon's hoard!

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Imagining The Ampersand: Hydro74

This issue's cover artist brings punk energy to the Feywild as he molds a unicorn from digital clay!

Would it surprise you to learn that artist Hydro74, the man who puts the alt into alt-cover, was “too punk rock” for school? Long before he ever picked up a digital paintbrush, he parted ways with the college he was attending in South Bend, Indiana, inadvertently taking his first steps towards a career that has seen him put an alternative stamp on numerous official D&D books.

“I pretty much put myself though the last couple of years of high school and college. I really wanted to be a teacher and I only took art classes as a way to keep my grade point average up,” Hydro74, a.k.a. Joshua Smith, remembers. “I discovered a class on Visual Communications, which was my introduction into the digital medium. During the final year, I built a website and posted drawings that were a cross between anime and *The Powerpuff Girls*, and I

ended up getting a couple of jobs. I finally dropped out of college when I was told they wouldn't approve further graphic design classes or any independent studies in software. From there I was self-taught."

Working out of a home office near Orlando, Florida, where he has lived for the past 18 years, Joshua describes his style as "vector". Although, true to form, he doesn't believe his work conforms to a label, in the same way that he feels it's nearly impossible to namecheck something as subjective as his early inspirations.



“I don’t think there is ever a single line I follow that conforms to a certain style,” he tells *Dragon+*. “And I noticed early on that I would jump from influence to influence. First, I dove into manga, then into tech-related design, then eventually into tattoo-inspired art, and the works of art legends from the ’60s to the ’80s. I liked Rick Griffin’s early techniques in stippling, Robt Williams’ chrome pieces, Ian Anderson/Build’s work for Designers Republic, and the street style of 123Klan. I was all over the map, and I found the best method was to

be inspired by those works but not to fully emulate them.”

While Hydro74’s final vector art pieces are 100 per cent digital, they don’t start out that way. Joshua begins the creative process with a “raw, loose doodle” as the idea starts to take on a direction of its own.

“From there, I build it up in sections. It’s a puzzle, and no piece is the same from start to finish. A lot changes as things are added, subtracted, and adjusted. The joy of working in a vector format is that the piece is like digital clay, allowing you to add or remove material at will,” he says.

For the displacer beast on the alt-cover for *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight*, molding that clay involved capturing both the elegance and the deadly nature of a big cat. Creative Director Kate Irwin offered the insight that the creature needed to be aggressive while also capturing its art nouveau style. And there was never any attempt to show the creature’s six legs, as the image needed to focus on its core elements. “The tentacles were always part of the design. That is what makes the displacer beast a displacer beast, after all,” Joshua says.



Dragon+ Issue 2 cover (select to view)

Hydro74 has channeled that same artistic energy into this issue’s cover, which marks the second time his work has graced the front of *Dragon+*. Where his cover for *Dragon+ issue #2* referenced skulls and roses, his second piece of *Witchlight* art was the perfect choice for a Feywild-inspired piece.

“A few other creature ideas were in the running,” he admits, “but after a short discussion, the unicorn seemed like a great option to match this art nouveau style.”

You can see more of Hydro74’s work on his **official website**, and

connect with him on [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), and [Twitter](#).

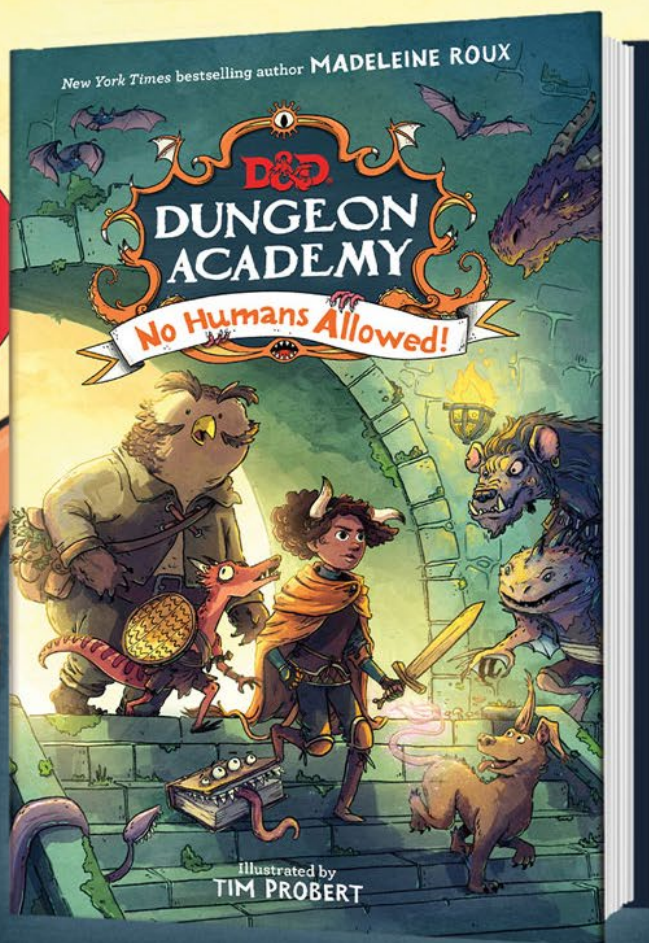


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IN THE WORKS



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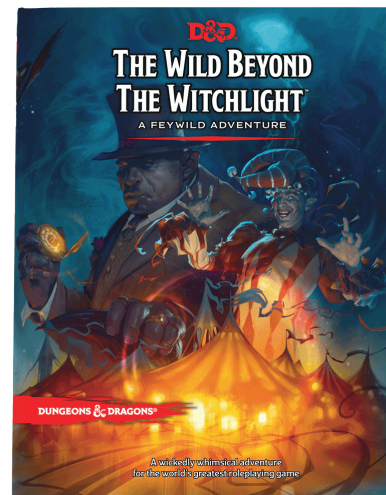
IN THE WORKS



The Wild Beyond the Witchlight

by Fiona Howat

The magnificently magical Feywild setting has given *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight* cover artists plenty to work with—once again with Dungeons & Dragons, it’s entirely fair to judge a book by its cover (and alt cover). But that incredible design doesn’t stop once you venture beyond Tyler Jacobsen and Hydro74’s epic art.



(tap to view)

Much as a soundtrack accompanies a movie, the page design and layout of a D&D sourcebook help set the tone for an adventure, merging words and art to create new worlds ready to be explored. As *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight* celebrates its release, *Dragon+* spoke with Senior Graphic Designer Trish Yochum to learn how she’s captured the witchcraft and whimsy of the Feywild in its interior design.

“When I’m trying to get a feel for a project that we’re working on, I like to look at the brief and make a list of keywords that stand out to me. These are words that give off a particular feeling that I want to include in the book,” Trish says. “Sometimes, I’ll do an online search for those keywords and see what pops up. Other times, I already have in mind an idea of what I want. It’s as if a spark goes off in my head and I’ll realize I have the perfect picture to use! At that point, I’ll

start digging through my files, pulling references together.”

LEAGUE OF MALEVOLENCE

The League of Malevolence is an odious assemblage of villains united in one purpose: the accumulation of power. Its founding member, the sorcerer Kelek, expects his confederates to work together for their mutual benefit, but he also encourages them to pursue their own evil schemes.

Five members of the league, including Kelek, are described here, although one member (Skylia) has recently parted ways with the others.

KELEK

Kelek is a greedy, narcissistic sociopath who revels in chaos but is a coward at heart. The fact that he’s highly intelligent makes him even more dangerous. More than anything, he wants the *staff of power* in the possession of his most hated foe, Ringlerun (described later in this appendix).

Alignment. Chaotic evil.

Personality Trait. “All who hear my name should tremble in fear!”

Ideal. “Kindness is just another word for weakness.”

Bond. “I must have Ringlerun’s staff! With it, the League of Malevolence will be unstoppable!”

Flaw. “I trust no one, nor am I trustworthy.”

COMBAT NOTES

Kelek uses Arcane Defense to bolster his low Armor Class whenever possible, and his challenge rating is a reflection of the likelihood that he will use Fiery Explosion as often as he can. If one or more of his allies get caught in a blast, so be it.



KELEK

Medium Humanoid (Human, Sorcerer), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 12 (*bracers of defense*)
Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +5, Cha +6
Skills Deception +6, Intimidation +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Draconic, Elvish
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Special Equipment. Kelek wears *bracers of defense* and carries a *staff of striking* with 10 charges. The staff regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn. If its last charge is expended, roll a d20; on a 1, the staff becomes a nonmagical quarterstaff.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kelek makes three attacks using Sorcerer’s Bolt, Staff of Striking, or a combination of them. He can replace one of the attacks with a use of Spellcasting.

Sorcerer’s Bolt. *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d12) force damage.

Staff of Striking. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, or 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage when used with two hands, and Kelek can expend up to 3 of the staff’s charges, dealing an extra 3 (1d6) force damage for each expended charge.

Fiery Explosion (Recharge 4–6). Kelek creates a magical explosion of fire centered on a point he can see within 120 feet of him. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Spellcasting. Kelek casts one of the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14):

At will: *light, mage hand, prestidigitation*
1/day each: *dominate beast, fly, mirror image, web*

REACTIONS

Arcane Defense (3/Day). When he is hit by an attack, Kelek protects himself with an invisible barrier of magical force. Until the end of his next turn, he gains a +5 bonus to AC, including against the triggering attack.

(select to view)

BRIEF ENCOUNTER

Trish reveals that the art team spends two to three weeks working up ideas derived based on these initial concepts. While she loves this part of the job, she prefers to keep her cards close to her chest at the beginning of a project.

“I don’t like to show off half-finished design ideas so I’m super protective of what I’m working on as we’re concepting. The art team usually comes up with a couple of different design options and we’ll start pulling elements from each of those. You’ll hear conversations such as, ‘I like this background texture but I like that typography better’ or ‘What happens if we put this element with that pattern?’ and so on,” she explains.

As mentioned above, Trish builds up a vast collection of references prior to starting work on a project, bringing together numerous sources that inspired her. This was a particularly large selection for *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight*.

“I wanted the world of the Feywild to come across as vibrant and as colorful as possible, like something out of a fairy tale. I had stacks of beautiful images that spoke to me, as well as so many books earmarked with notes on them,” she recalls.

“There’s something intriguing about how things aren’t always what they seem in the Feywild. That world is very beautiful, mesmerizing even, but danger is always hidden just out of sight so you must take care! As a team, we liked the idea of a fey inspired carnival, packed with imagery of fairy dust, magical effects, and mischief.

“And while I was thinking about fairies and flying through the air, I began gravitating towards images of butterfly wings. I found them absolutely fascinating and I wanted to use those in my designs. I started looking at different species of butterflies and drawing out their unique wing shapes.”

Warduke's services as a remorseless killer-for-hire can be easily bought. The evil swordsman serves Kelek as a cohort and adventuring companion from time to time. He isn't terribly bright, which is why he leaves the plotting and scheming to others.

Alignment. Chaotic evil.

Ideal. "I expect to be paid well for my handiwork."

Flaw. “I would rather die than surrender.”

Warduke likes to hit things with his sword; it's as simple as that.

Medium Humanoid (Human), Chaotic Evil

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +3

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

Special Equipment. Warduke wears a *dread helm* (see appendix A) and wields a *flame tongue* longsword.

Multiattack. Warduke makes three Dagger or Flame Tongue attacks.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Flame Tongue. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slash-

ing damage when used with two hands, plus 7 (2d6) fire damage if the weapon is aflame.

Flaming Blade. Warduke ignites or extinguishes his *flame tongue* longsword. While aflame, it sheds bright light in a 40-foot radius and dim light for an additional 40 feet.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Warduke regains 13 hit points.



BARE BONES DESIGN

“It depends on each book where I begin the build. Sometimes, the design lead on that project might have an idea for a particular section and that drives where I start. Usually, though, I like to start at the

beginning with Chapter One and the Introduction, and build from there,” Trish says, adding that there’s one section she always leaves until the very end.

“The bestiary sections of any Dungeons & Dragons book are often my biggest challenge. They’re like a puzzle, as you try to figure out where all the stat blocks, text, and artwork will go, so they fit nicely together on a single-page spread. It can feel like a never-ending game of *Tetris*, so I always leave that until last.”

Another part of the process Trish particularly relishes is the opportunity to work alongside so many talented artists and illustrators.



STRONGHEART

Medium Humanoid (Human, Paladin), Lawful Good

Armor Class 20 (plate armor, shield)
Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Cha +5
Skills Insight +3, Persuasion +5
Condition Immunities frightened
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Dwarvish
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Special Equipment. Strongheart wields *Steel*, a sentient, lawful good longsword (see appendix A).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Strongheart makes three *Steel* attacks.

Steel. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage when used with two hands. Once on each of his turns, Strongheart can also cause the blade to gleam with holy light. If he does so, the target is blinded until the start of Strongheart's next turn.

Revivify (Recharges at the Next Dawn). While holding *Steel*, Strongheart casts *revivify*.

Spellcasting. Strongheart casts one of the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13):
3/day each: *command*, *detect evil and good*, *protection from evil and good*
1/day each: *lesser restoration*, *remove curse*, *zone of truth*

REACTIONS

Protect Another. When a creature Strongheart can see attacks another creature that is within 5 feet of him, Strongheart can use his reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll, provided he is carrying a shield.

(select to view)

“We couldn’t do what we do without their beautiful pieces—it’s a real privilege. I particularly love looking through the images and finding unexpected things in the backgrounds. These might be tiny, hidden details that you could easily miss if you flip through the book, so it’s like finding an Easter egg in a piece of art!” she beams.

“I hope that when an artist sees their work in one of our books, they like how it looks on the page. We want them to feel that all the time

and effort they put into creating their work has been showcased.

“What really appeals to me in any book is having something which brings you back to it time and time again because you want to keep looking at it. It can be anything—from a gorgeous piece of art to the way the images and the text complement each other on a page. For *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight*, I personally found myself being drawn back to Will Doyle and Stacy Allen’s maps of the Witchlight Carnival and Prismeer, the Feywild domain.”

Once her work is completed, Trish loves nothing more than picking up the final copy of a book and flipping through the pages, taking it all in.

“At the end of the day, we’ve created this amazing, tangible item that players can hold in their hands and use to run their games. It’s an extra bonus that I also have a beautiful book which brings back so many memories of cool things our team did while we were putting it together,” she shares.

“I’ll be looking through it and thinking, ‘I remember talking about that piece of art’ or ‘I remember why we did this and why we did that.’ And that’s something truly magical!”

The Wild Beyond the Witchlight releases today and is available now at your [local game store](#), bookstores such as [Barnes & Noble](#), and [Books-a-Million](#), or online at retailers such as [Amazon](#). A digital version is also available at [D&D Beyond](#), and [Roll20](#).

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IN THE WORKS



Fizban's Treasury of Dragons

by Matt Chapman

We thought we were spoiling you in **the previous issue of *Dragon+***, when we revealed that the draconic goodies in *Fizban's Treasury of Dragons* would be stacked higher than an ancient wyrm's hoard. Alongside races, feats, spells, and magic items, Project Lead James Wyatt promised a deeper dive into the creatures themselves, including dragons so powerful they have transcended the limitations of a single world in the Material Plane.



(select to view)

As part of that introduction to *Fizban's Treasury of Dragons*, we also revealed that the bestiary chapter makes up almost a third of the book. We can now confirm that this massive resource delivers 70 creature varieties (counting the different age categories), including the sapphire, amethyst, crystal, emerald, and topaz dragons of the gem family, deep dragons, sea serpents, moonstone dragons, further great wyrm dragons (chromatic, metallic, and gem versions), and stats for aspects of Bahamut and Tiamat. It'll also feature some dragonborn champions and humanoid dragon servitors.



But this issue we're able to go even further and pluck a few of those draconic goodies from Fizban's famed treasure pile. We're revealing two of the "dragon-adjacent creatures" from the book that are as terrifying as they are amazing!

First up is the eyedrake, a beholder-kin in the form of a dragon that retains its deadly rays. Not to be outdone, the elder brain dragon sees the ultimate expression of illithid domination take flight for the first time. As well as sharing the art of both these new monsters, James explained the thinking behind these two incredible (and incredibly dangerous) creatures.



(select to view)

EYEDRAKE (CR 8)

“In *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, we discussed the idea that new beholders come into being through the dreams of existing beholders. The eyedrake is what happens when a beholder becomes obsessed with a dragon,” James says.

“Perhaps a deep dragon is encroaching on a beholder's territory, or a sapphire dragon is stalking it. When the beholder becomes obsessed with dragons up to the point that its dreams are affected, what you

end up with is a large beholder-kin that is vaguely dragon-like. It's a bizarre combination.

“In basic outline, an eyedrake resembles both a dragon and a beholder. It looks like a winged, draconic creature but it has no true limbs and those wings are made of eyestalks. Its mouth is perpetually open, showing a large central eye that emits a breath-like wave of antimagic energy. It really is the breath weapon of a dragon with an antimagic cone of a beholder—two great tastes that taste great together.”

ELDER BRAIN DRAGON (CR 22)

“*Volo's Guide to Monsters* also goes into great detail describing how mind flayers create new additions to their numbers by implanting tadpoles into living, humanoid creatures and transforming them into other mind flayers. There are a few additions to that in *Rime of the Frostmaiden*, which describes other examples of how that process works. The elder brain dragon is an extension of that concept, just more terrifying,” James explains.

“Typically, an elder brain lives at the centre of a mind flayer community, immobile in a pool. Rather than implanting a tadpole into a dragon, the elder brain forms a sac on the dragon's back and covers it with a membrane and tentacles, transforming it into a hideous aberration. It also extends its tentacles into the dragon's brain to take control of its body.

“This process occurs when the mind flayer colony manages to capture a dragon. Teams of mind flayers bind the dragon and subject it to this gruesome transformation. The horror of this monster is it brings the elder brain to you, taking a creature that would usually be immobile and giving it flight! It's worryingly mobile, because it now has a fly speed of 80 ft. and can hover, using psychic levitation as much as its membranous wings.

“The elder brain also takes over the dragon's breath weapon mechanism and spews a stream of brine filled with tadpoles, to begin performing ceremorphosis as it transforms the humanoids around it. Characters continue taking psychic damage even when infested with a tadpole, stabilizing if they're reduced to zero hit points but

remaining unconscious, until they transform into a mind flayer.

“In addition to the traditional claw, bite, and breath weapons of a dragon, the elder brain dragon can also grapple with its tentacles. True to its nature as a psionic beast, one of its legendary actions is to break a spellcaster’s concentration when they’re grappled, ending their spell effects. It’s really going to mess with parties!”

Fizban's Treasury of Dragons releases October 26, 2021 and is available for pre-order now at your [local game store](#), bookstores such as [Barnes & Noble](#), and [Books-a-Million](#), or online at retailers such as Amazon. A digital version is also available at [D&D Beyond](#), and [Roll20](#).

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IN THE WORKS



Strixhaven: A Curriculum of Chaos

Quiet at the back! School is in session once more as Head Teacher Amanda Hamon reveals another key element of life at the multiverse’s most prestigious magical academy. Amanda has already delivered **a rousing lecture about the institution**, including details of its five colleges (and why joining the Strixhaven Iron-Lifters Society in rush week might help you befriend Greta Gorunn before everyone else decides they want to). Now she’s back to tell prospective students about one of the more unusual friends you might make at this school: your mascot.



“Each of the five colleges has its own physical location on the larger Strixhaven campus, and each of these five areas have mascot creatures that live there that are thematically appropriate to each

college. These creatures are usually prevalent there because of the type of magic that's common within that college," the Project Lead on *Strixhaven: A Curriculum of Chaos* tells *Dragon+*.

The mascot associated with each college is:

Spirit Statue Mascot (Lorehold)

Lorehold students often call upon the spirits of dead creatures to enhance their studies of the past. These mascots are ancient spirits housed in statues to give them a more permanent residence as they assist the living.

Art Elemental Mascot (Prismari)

Often referred to as a "living expression," this elemental is an aspect of creativity or emotion given physical form.



Art Elemental mascot (Select to view)

Fractal Mascot (Quandrix)

Arithmancers know that these fractals are actually living equations, artificial life forms created by extrapolating magic from the mathematical patterns in nature.

Inkling Mascot (Silverquill)

Squelching slightly as they wriggle through the air, these living blobs of shadowy ink are often summoned by professors who require endless quantities of the stuff for their writing workshops (or lonely

students hoping for company as they study).

Pest Mascot (Witherbloom)

Grumpy, spiky, and generally irritating, these ferret-sized swamp creatures hold deep wells of life essence.



Pest mascot (Select to view)

One of the first opportunities characters have to engage with mascots is as part of their studies at Strixhaven. When a bunch of mascots escape and run amok, the faculty member who was cataloguing them

asks for the students' help. The task of looking for these runaways allows the characters to experience many of Strixhaven's locations in a new way.

"When the characters find the mascots, they also learn about the game of Mage Tower. This is a magical game that's played at Strixhaven and requires one team to try and steal the other team's mascot and bring it to their side of the field to win," Amanda explains.

"Once they discover this game, the characters are encouraged to form a team. As part of that, they've got to pick their mascot. Our hope is that the players pick a mascot they're attached to and then that becomes part of the experience—and possibly even a member of their party."

MASCOT MAYHEM

Cataloguing mascots and transporting them across a playing field aren't the only ways you can interact with them. Characters who've already taken the Strixhaven Initiative feat (which provides access to spells common to your chosen college) can also choose the Strixhaven Mascot feat from 4th level onwards. This allows them to cast *find familiar* as a ritual and have that familiar take the form of a mascot.

This feat's abilities include gifting one of your Attack actions to your mascot (which it carries out using its reaction), and teleporting to swap places with it if the mascot familiar is within 60 ft. of you. This teleport action can be taken once per long rest, or repeated if you expend a 2nd level or higher spell slot.

Mascots have also inspired a magic item that's as adorable as it is useful. The *cuddly Strixhaven mascot* is a common wondrous item that's perfect for snuggling. This Tiny, magic toy can be pressed to your leg, arm, or shoulder and remains there for one hour, where it will help you fight off fear. When you make a saving throw to avoid or end the frightened condition and the toy is on your person, you can roll with advantage once per long rest!

Strixhaven: A Curriculum of Chaos releases December 7, 2021 and is available for pre-order at your **local game store**, bookstores such as **Barnes & Noble**, and **Books-a-Million**, or online at retailers such

as Amazon. A digital version is also available at [D&D Beyond](#),
and [Roll20](#).

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D&D Annual 2022

As big fans of the *Dungeons & Dragons Annual 2021*, *Dragon+* easily dodges a surprise round at news that this quintessentially British publication is returning with a new edition. Any competent documancer will tell you that the word itself suggests an ability to rise anew that would be the envy of any lich.

Annual (adjective)

Occurring once every year.



(select to view)



The 2021 version of this traditional UK holiday gift pulled off a tightrope act worthy of a headline spot at the Witchlight Carnival’s big top. As well as introducing Dungeons & Dragons to those new to tabletop roleplaying games, it also packed in enough goodies to entertain lifelong fans. The *D&D Annual 2022* plans to follow suit, moving things on a step further in its presentation of the world’s greatest roleplaying game.

“Whereas the 2021 book served as an introduction to D&D, this time we’ve focused on the next steps of the game,” Writer Susie Rae explains. “You’ll find details of how to get into the game and roll your first character, alongside advice on how to take your first steps

in becoming a Dungeon Master. And that's all built into the four pillars we want to showcase, which are lore, game play, community, and puzzles.

DESTINATION SEARCH

After travelling the length of the Forgotten Realms, legendary explorer Volo is settling down to write his next book. Can you find the locations he's visited in this wordsearch?





YAWNING PORTAL
WATERDEEP
NEVERWINTER
ICEWIND DALE
TEN TOWNS
LUSKAN
FEYWILDS
UNDERDARK
SWORD COAST
BALDUR'S GATE
AGATHA'S GROVE
MYTHRAL HALL
CHULT
PORT MYANZARU
WYRM'S GATE
SPINE OF THE WORLD
PHANDLIH
TRACKLESS SEA
FIELDS OF SLAUGHTER
SALTWATER

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DICE DISASTER

After a particularly hectic session, the party's dice have been knocked onto the floor. As they scramble to work out whose dice are whose, can you work out which set is incomplete? There should be seven dice in each set - a d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20 and d100.



(select to view)

Alongside DMing advice from such luminaries as Matt Mercer, Travis McElroy, and Mark Hulmes, in-depth lore drops look at races such as aarakocra, goliaths, firbolg, and genasi.

“There’s also a discussion of the drow as we chatted with Bob Salvatore about the **new tribes in his latest Drizzt novel**,” Susie continues. “And we wanted to show that there are lots of ways to play any of these races—your goliath doesn’t have to be a typical fighter or a barbarian, you can have plenty of fun with a goliath sorcerer. I came up with about 40 different character concepts that I want to play while I was writing that section!”



(select to view)

As well as a tour of the Forgotten Realms that takes in storied locations as varied as Icewind Dale, Neverwinter Wood, and Menzoberranzan, there's also an introduction to what lies beyond the Prime Material Plane. Along the way, readers will learn about iconic heroes and villains from D&D lore such as Minsc and Boo, Vecna, and Xanathar, while also enjoying descriptions and art for magic items that range "from super powerful to really silly."

The inclusivity of the game also gets showcased in the *Dungeons & Dragons Annual 2022*. Susie felt it was important for players to understand that they can carve out their own space and they enlisted the help of podcasters to get that message across.

BESTIARY

BOSS FIGHTS

As your party levels up, they will be able to take on stronger and more terrifying monsters in combat. After playing for months, sometimes even years, players may eventually find themselves face-to-face with some of the most powerful and iconic creatures in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS history.

LICH

CHALLENGE RATING: 21

Mages who sacrifice their mortal soul in exchange for untold power will turn into Liches. These undead creatures are highly intelligent and able to perform magic far beyond anything that a mortal could produce. They store their life essence in a magical artifact called a phylactery.

SKILLS
As well as being 19th level spellcasters, with the ability to cast spells ranging

from magic hand all the way to the aptly named power word kill, Liches can also paralyze a creature with a single touch.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS
The ability *disrupt life* drains the life essence of any creature within 30 feet of the lich at the time of casting, while *frightening gaze* allows it to terrify anyone with a look.

HOW TO DEFEAT IT
In order to defeat a lich, you must first find and destroy its phylactery, otherwise it will be able to come back after being killed.

TARRASQUE

CHALLENGE RATING: 30

Not only is the tarrasque the most terrifying creature in the Forgotten Realms, it is also the highest-level monster in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS bestiary. It sleeps for several years at a time but, when woken, its unquenchable hunger and drive for destruction means that it will attempt to very literally eat the entire world.

SKILLS
It can take five attacks on its turn, with its horns, spiked tail, razor-sharp claws, and enormous teeth. The tarrasque can also swallow creatures whole, and the unlucky victim will be

subject to 16d6 acid damage at the beginning of each of the tarrasque's lengthy turns.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS
As well as taking an action on its own turn, the tarrasque can attack or move at the end of three other creatures' turns.

HOW TO DEFEAT IT
Besides being formidable in combat, the tarrasque is nigh-on impossible to kill, so your best chance is to trap it or send it back to sleep at the world's core.

KRAKEN

CHALLENGE RATING: 23

Adventurers taking to the seas should beware of the legendary kraken. Lurking in the depths of the ocean, krakens are enormous, squid-like monsters that prey on ships with their powerful tentacles, dragging unsuspecting sailors to their deaths.

SKILLS
Not only can a kraken attack creatures with its vicious teeth and tentacles, it can also create storms, calling down bolts of lightning to strike its enemies.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS
Krakens have the ability to expel clouds of pitch-dark ink, which plunge those nearby into darkness and cause

poison damage to anyone unlucky enough to get caught in them.

HOW TO DEFEAT IT
They have immunity to most non-magical attacks, so your best chance against a kraken would be to attack with powerful magical weapons and spells.

PIT FIEND

CHALLENGE RATING: 20

The Nine Hells are filled with devils and demons, all with their own hierarchy of power. At the top of this hierarchy are pit fiends, vicious winged devils with not only an appetite, but a talent for inflicting pain and suffering on their victims.

SKILLS
Just being around a pit fiend can cause a powerful feeling of fear, making them hard to stand next to, never mind kill.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS
Perhaps the one positive to facing a pit fiend is that they don't have legendary actions – though they can make four attacks on a single action.

HOW TO DEFEAT IT
Whatever you do, don't attack them with fire. Pit fiends thrive in the fires of Hell and are immune to damage from it. Magical and silvered weapons should do the trick – if you can get close enough to use them.

(select to view)

“It’s not hard to celebrate diversity when there are so many streams and podcasts with such a wide mix of people involved,” they explain. “I spoke with *No More Damsels* and *Three Black Halflings* and it was really nice to see that side of the game.

“It’s important to show potential players that D&D embraces inclusivity and that they’ll always find a group of likeminded people. New players don’t have to know all of the existing lore, although it’s fine if they do, but they can come to the tabletop and play the game they want to play with the people they choose to play with. This is a game for everyone.”

The Dungeons & Dragons Annual 2022 is released by HarperCollins on September 30, 2021 and is available now **for pre-order**.

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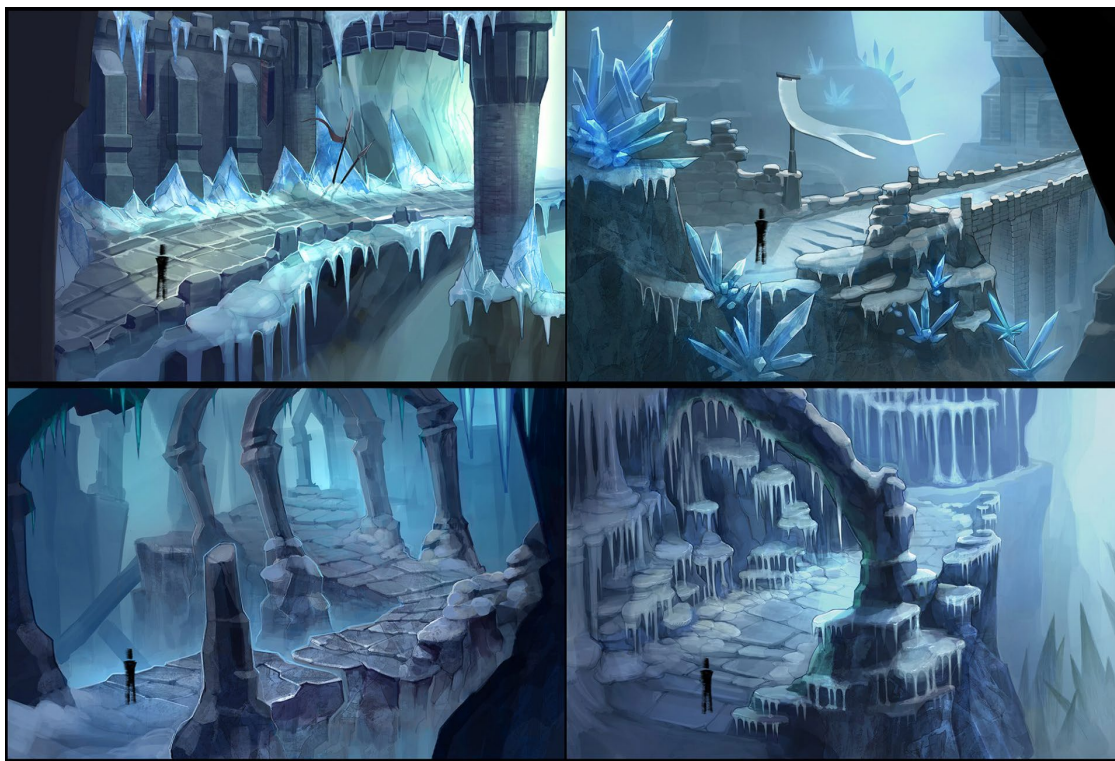


Warriors of Waterdeep: Shimmersky Valley

If you've been dreaming of an escape to someplace new, then there's never been a better time to download *Warriors of Waterdeep*. The mobile video game is adding its eighth adventure as players get the chance to visit Shimmersky Valley, just a short jaunt from Ten-Towns in Icewind Dale.

Shimmersky Valley was first teased as part of the *Warriors of Waterdeep adventure map* created by Jason Thompson. This hunting and trading route to the north of Ten-Towns has few permanent structures and no full-time residents. Instead, travelers cross freely during the long summer days, taking shelter as needed from the cold and the torments of an occasional bheur hag. During the months of long winter night, no passage is advisable.

Despite its peaceful reputation, Shimmersky Valley sits uncomfortably close to Dragonscar Gorge. The site of ancient battle between a group of white dragons and the frost giants, this gorge is now home to the truly dangerous and desperate. When word of trade disruptions along the route reaches Waterdeep, Laeral Silverhand sends in the heroes to investigate.



Shimmersky Valley (select to view)

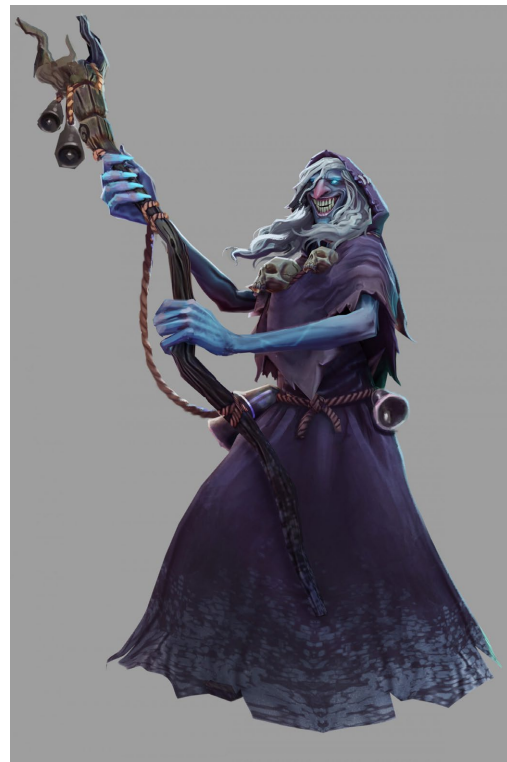
“Shimmersky Valley is a new area, inspired by *Rime of the Frostmaiden*—hence the snowy owlbears, because who could resist those!” Stephen David Wark, Brand Manager at Ludia, tells *Dragon+*. “It’s a seasonal village in a glacial valley, and characters will encounter a frost giant known only as Shattercrown, who is leading the charge to excavate a lost castle from the ice.”



Shimmersky Winter Wolf

On their route into Dragonscar Gorge to face off against the Frosthunger Horde, players will battle ice mephits and winter wolves, as well as familiar humanoids such as goblins, gnolls, and bugbears boasting all new attacks and abilities. But where frost giants are causing trouble, white dragons cannot be far behind. That's one conflict no sensible party wants to see spiral out of control.

Shimmersky Valley is part of the *Valley & Valor* update for *Warriors of Waterdeep*, scheduled for release in late October/early November. Available for eight weeks to all players who have completed the Frostsilver Mines adventure, Shimmersky Valley will be unlocked as a regular



Bheurhag (select to view)

adventure in early 2022.

Warriors Of Waterdeep is available now for **Android** and **iOS** devices as a free download with in-game purchases. You can follow the game on **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **Twitter**, and **YouTube**.



FREE GEMS!

Our friends at Ludia are gifting 50 gems to every reader who clicks on **this link**. You must have completed your first battle in *Warriors of Waterdeep* and you must click the link on the mobile device where the game is installed, as it will open the game to deliver the reward.

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For Fans By Fans: The Red Collection

A beholder, a mind flayer, a displacer beast, and a tarrasque walk into a room...

No, this isn't the start of some awful bardic dad joke. It could be you and your friends if you get your hands on this epic new *Magic: The Gathering*/D&D crossover collection at **For Fans By Fans**.

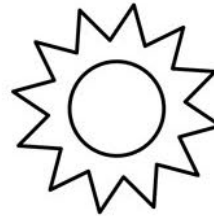
Using art from the *Adventures in the Forgotten Realms* set of *Magic* cards, these items will stop people in their tracks faster than a well-placed *power word stun*.



The designs are available now at \$25 for a T-shirt or tank top, \$30 for a long-sleeved T-shirt, \$35 for a raglan T-shirt, and \$50 for a pullover hoodie.

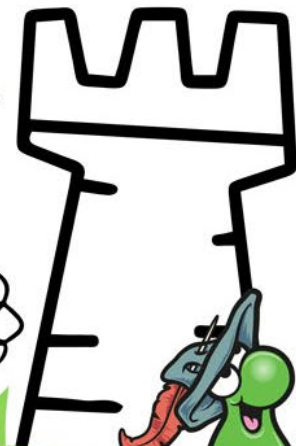
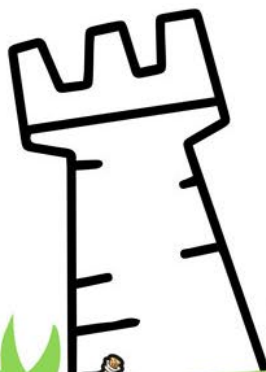
[CHECK OUT THE RED COLLECTION](#)

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HELP RESTORE HARMONY

UNLOCK CUSTOM ADVENTURES



FIND OUT MORE



D&D Celebration 2021

Reveling in the release of *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight* and enjoying fey delights in Virtual Play!

Roll up! Roll up! The Witchlight Carnival is in town and your ticket to adventure awaits! *D&D Celebration 2021* brings together fan-favorite names from the community to play in unique and surprising games. Tune in each day from Thursday 23 to Sunday 26, 2021 to see where their stories take them.

The weekend of streaming also includes a packed schedule of panels on lots of D&D topics, as well as the inside scoop on what's on the horizon for the world's greatest roleplaying game. Head to our next page (or [jump online](#)) to see the full schedule ahead of the event, with videos of every livestream and panel magically appearing in *Dragon+* once the Witchlight Carnival has shuttered its stalls.



VIRTUAL PLAY

Have you got your ticket to the Witchlight Carnival? Join friends from around the world and celebrate the release of *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight* with a weekend of virtual gaming. Virtual Play includes a number of exciting offerings, so gather your party and run through adventures in *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight*, *Ravenloft: Mist Hunters* and *Dreams of the Red Wizards*, as well as joining multiple tables in the Witchlight Carnival Epic. And if you're new to D&D, you can pull up a virtual seat and learn how to set out on your very first adventure.

There's so much gaming available this year, we've added a bonus fourth day! This year's Virtual Play begins on Thursday September 23 at 2:00 PM ET / 11:00 AM PDT and you can register to play at the Yawning Portal.

REGISTER TO PLAY

Featured games include:

Lost Things

Play your character as a kid entering the Witchlight Carnival for the first time in this prelude adventure! Like a half-forgotten dream, this spectacle drifts into our world once every eight years, drawing folk of all ages to delight in its fey wonders. Entry without a ticket is strictly forbidden, and the consequences for trespass echo through time. This two-hour prelude should be played before *The Witchlight Carnival* (see below).

Content Warning: Fairytale abduction, magical charm.

The Witchlight Carnival

This multi-table interactive experience kicks off *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight*! The journey for the safe return of your treasured possession has led you back to the Witchlight Carnival: a spectacular event of games, music, food, and friendship. However, strange things are afoot, and it's up to you to find out what they are and who is behind them. This four-hour, multi-table Epic adventure is for players beginning *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight* campaign.

Content Warning: Fairytale abduction, magical charm.



Extra Life



We're pleased to announce that D&D is once again partnering with **Extra Life** and Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. Special event apparel featuring Dirlagraun, the Witchlight Carnival's gray-whiskered displacer beast, is now available to order with all proceeds going directly to the charity.

Dirlagraun looks after lost children much like the D&D community bands together to help sick and injured children, and appears on a T-shirt, a 3/4-sleeve raglan T-shirt, a mousepad, a messenger bag, and as a pin badge.

GRAB YOURS NOW!

DUNGEON MASTERS CHALLENGE

Many were called during the Open Submission stage of this epic competition, but few were chosen! Ten Dungeon Masters in all, to be precise.

Those finalists were announced in July at **D&D LIVE**, presented by G4. The competition officially began for these Dungeon Masters just a few days later and ran through August, as the competitors with the lowest overall score in a weekly design challenge were eliminated by judges Amanda Hamon, Jennifer Kretchmer, and B. Dave Walters.



Along the way, David Reynolds, Brian Currin, Erin Marek, Angela Alice Simpson, Daniel Solano Gómez, Abdul-Mehmood “Asif” Nicholls, and Melissa Kester were asked to pack up their dice as the field narrowed to three.



The remaining competitors—Andrew Bishkinskyi, Sergio Solórzano, and Brad Thompson—were assigned their final challenge at the beginning of September. Their task was to run an encounter for the judges, with special guests Krystina Arielle and Matthew Lillard also joining the party.

One epic competition. Three worthy Dungeons Masters. The final

showdown of the Dungeon Masters Challenge takes place at *D&D Celebration 2021*, where the winner will be announced live at 3:00 PM PDT on September 26, 2021.



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Streaming Highlights: D&D Celebration

Rounding up all the action from *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight* launch event!



A party of accomplished adventurers has been assembled. The tickets to the Witchlight Carnival have been purchased (or purloined). The DMs and the hosts have their game faces on. Let the star-studded shenanigans roar to life as *D&D Celebration 2021* begins a weekend of streaming!

This year's Dungeons & Dragons showcase highlights the wonders that await in the newly released campaign *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight*. Aside from the liveplay entertainment, *D&D Celebration 2021* includes further reveals of upcoming storylines (discover more exclusive details on both *Strixhaven: A Curriculum of Chaos* and *Fizban's Treasury to Dragons* earlier in this issue), deep-dive panel discussions, and even a musical!

We present the schedule of livestreams and panels below, listed as they'll happen with all times in PDT. We'll update this page with videos of every event once *D&D Celebration* has rocked all of our worlds!

SESSION ZERO (Thursday Sep 23)

04:00 PM

Hosts: Brandy Camel and Elle Osili-Wood

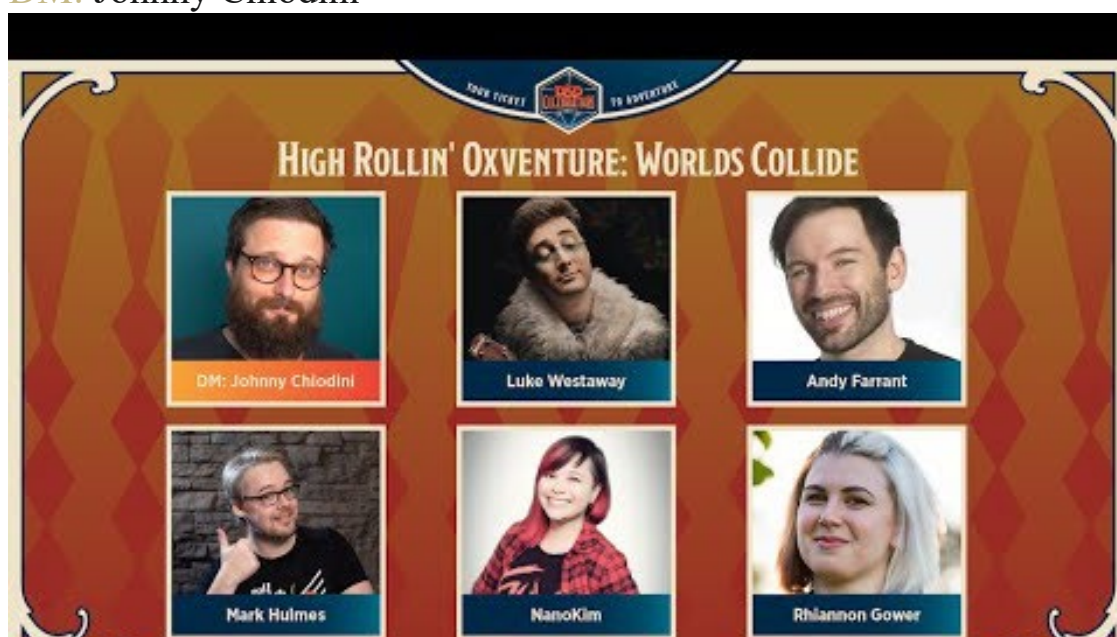
Brandy and Elle kick off the D&D Celebration weekend with an overview of the games and panels, the upcoming D&D products, the results of the DM Challenge, and more!



DAY 1 (Friday Sep 24)



8:00 AM: High Rollin' Oxventure: Worlds Collide
DM: Johnny Chiodini



10:00 AM: Intro to Adventurers League

Host: Amy Lynn Dzura

Panelists: Ma'at Crook, Bee Zelda

Welcome to the Adventurers League! Let's talk about everything you need to get started in the official Organized Play campaign for fifth edition Dungeons & Dragons.

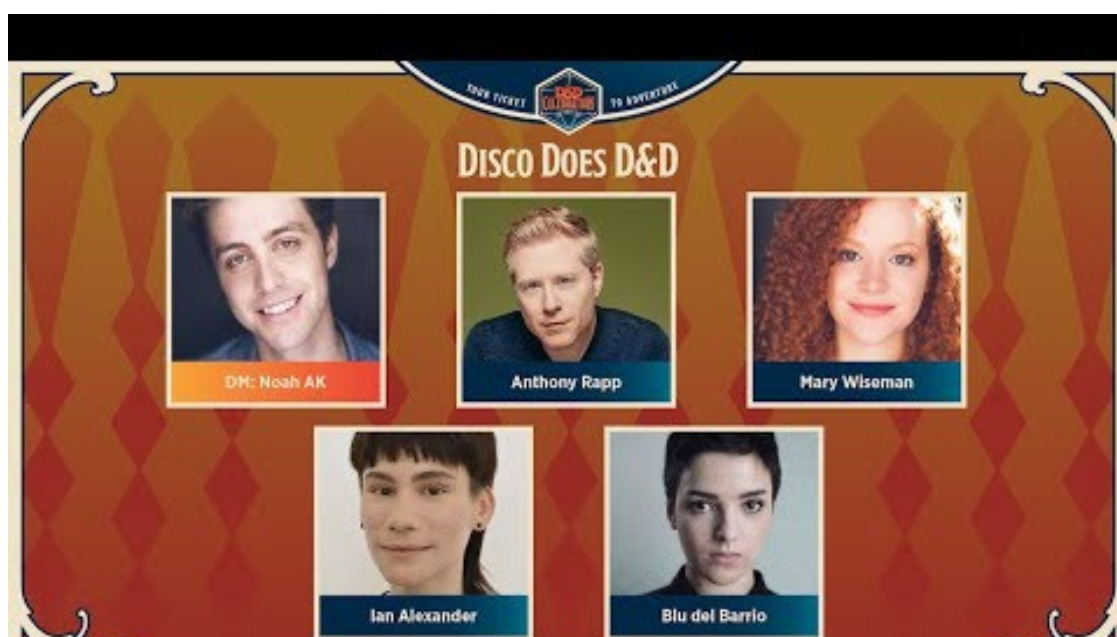


11:00 AM: Disco Does D&D

DM: Noah Averbach-Katz

Players: Ian Alexander, Blu del Barrio, Anthony Rapp, Wil Wheaton, Mary Wiseman

Cast members from *Star Trek: Discovery* play D&D!

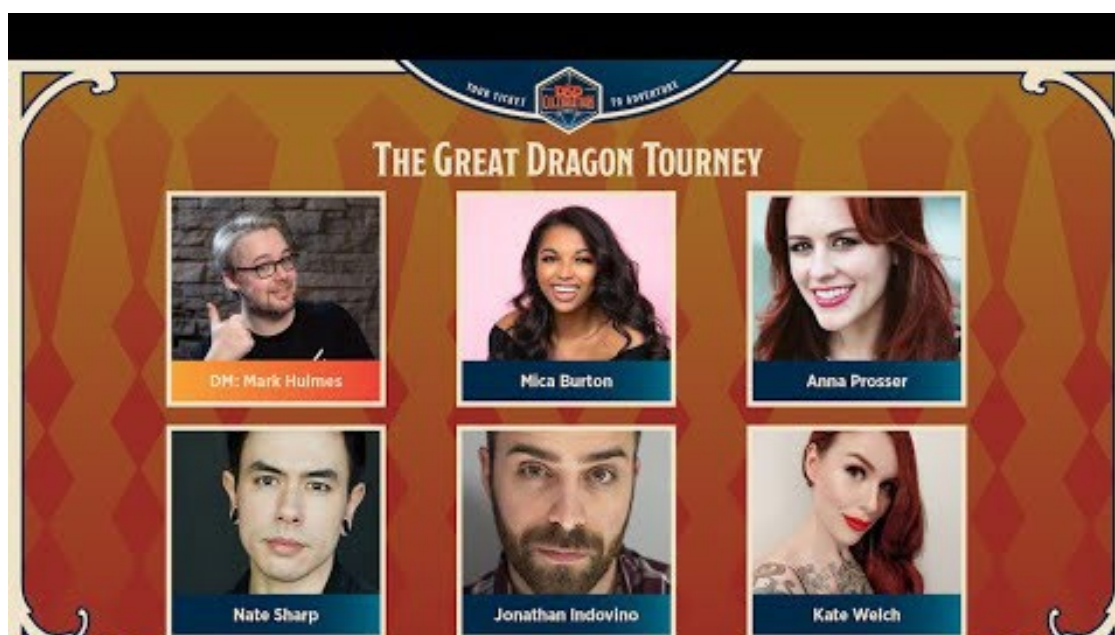


1:00 PM: The Great Dragon Tourney

DM: Mark Hulmes

Players: Mica Burton, Jonathan Indovino, Anna Prosser, Nathan Sharp, Kate Welch

Get ready for a tourney unlike any other featuring dragon jousting, racing, and diplomacy.



3:00 PM: The Feywild: The Wicked & Whimsy

Host: **Brandy Camel**

Panelists: Stacy Allen, Will Doyle, Chris Perkins

Full of magic and mystery, weirdness and wonder, the Feywild is a domain unlike any other. But is it all you think it is? Journey to Prismeer with your fey guides and uncover the whimsy, the wicked, and everything else the fantastic Feywild has to offer.



4:00 PM: Players of the Yon

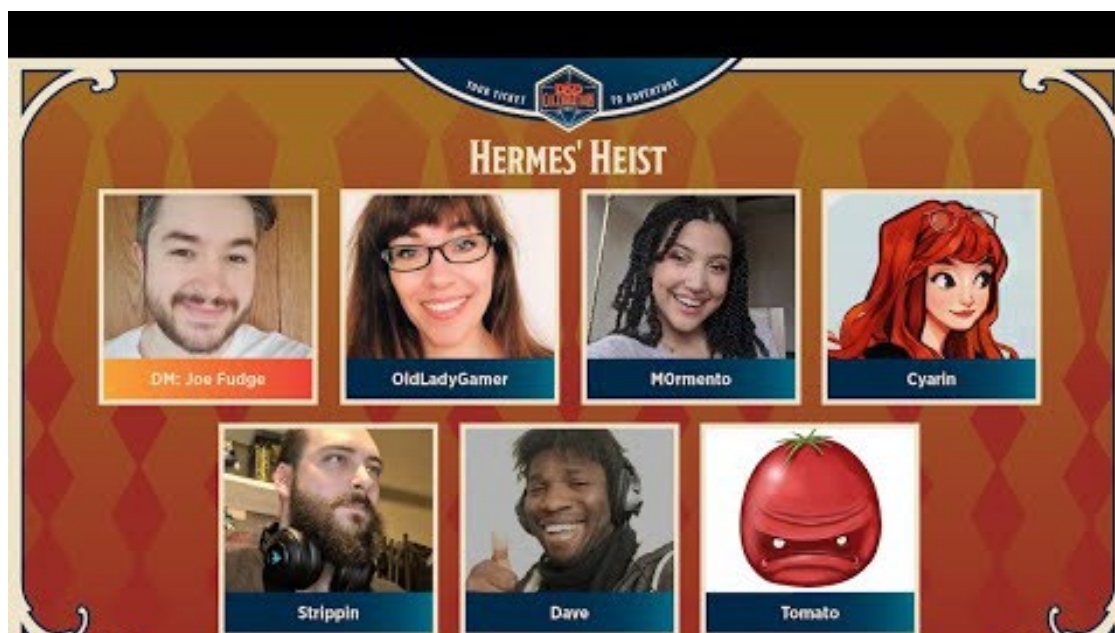
DM: Dave Harmon



DAY 2 (Saturday Sep 25)



8:00 AM: Hermes' Heist
DM: Joe Fudge

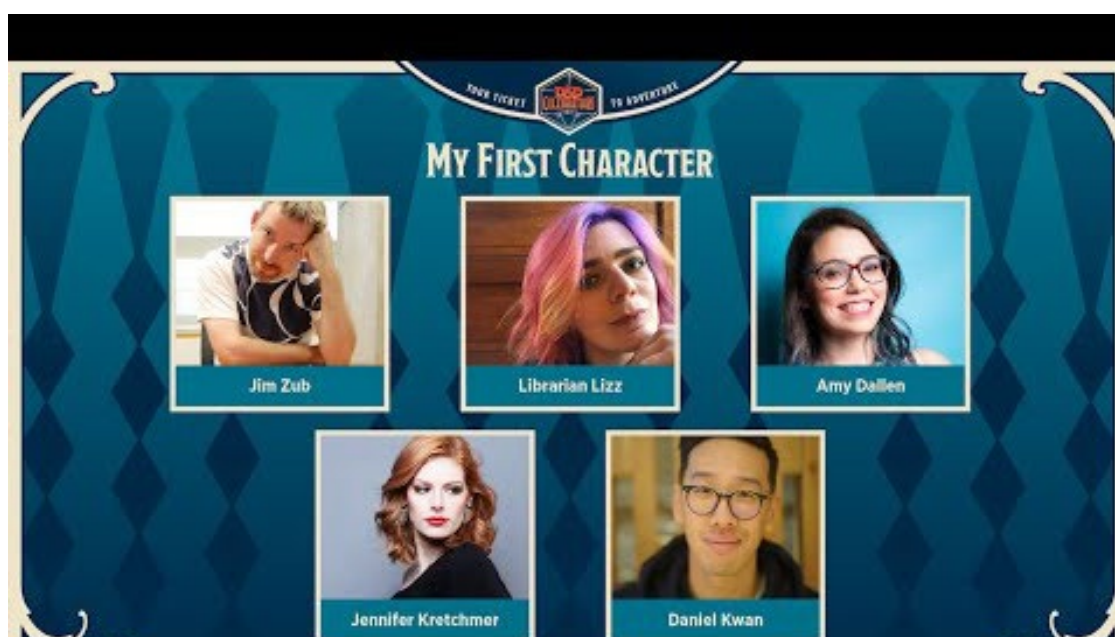


10:00 AM: My First Character

Host: Jim Zub

Panelists: Amy Dallen, Jennifer Kretchmer, Daniel Kwan, Lizz Simpson

Teaching Dungeons & Dragons to new players can be tough for any Dungeon Master, and when those adventurers-to-be are kids or teens the Challenge Rating is even higher. Our panel shares the best ways to engage young players and set them up for a lifetime of adventure.

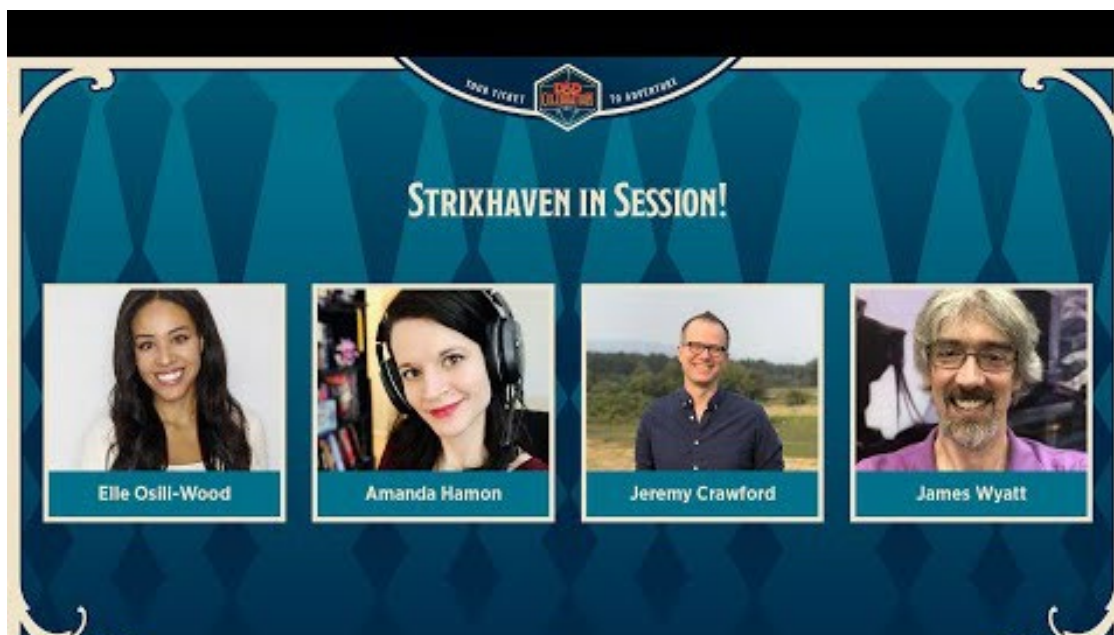


11:00 AM: Strixhaven in Session!

Host: Elle Osili-Wood

Panelists: Jeremy Crawford, Amanda Hamon, James Wyatt

Welcome to Strixhaven University orientation! Come learn all about the exciting opportunities that await while studying at this prestigious school of magic. Professor Amanda Hamon, Lead Designer of *A Curriculum of Chaos*, explains how students can enhance their multi-year adventure with extracurricular activities, like getting a job or joining a club, making new friends, and of course taking exams. School is in session this November, so it's time to get prepared!



12:00 PM: The Slapstick Hunt: A Silly Chase

DM: Amy Vorpahl

Players: Vince Caso, Jeff Lewis, Amy Okuda, Sandeep Parikh, Robin Thorsen

DM Amy Vorpahl leads cast members from *The Guild* on a comedic adventure through the multiverse.



2:00 PM: Fizban's Treasury of Dragons Revealed

Host: Elle Osili-Wood

Panelist: James Wyatt

Join James as he unlocks the treasury and discusses rich, immersive dragon-themed campaigns that go beyond the lairs of D&D's most iconic monsters.



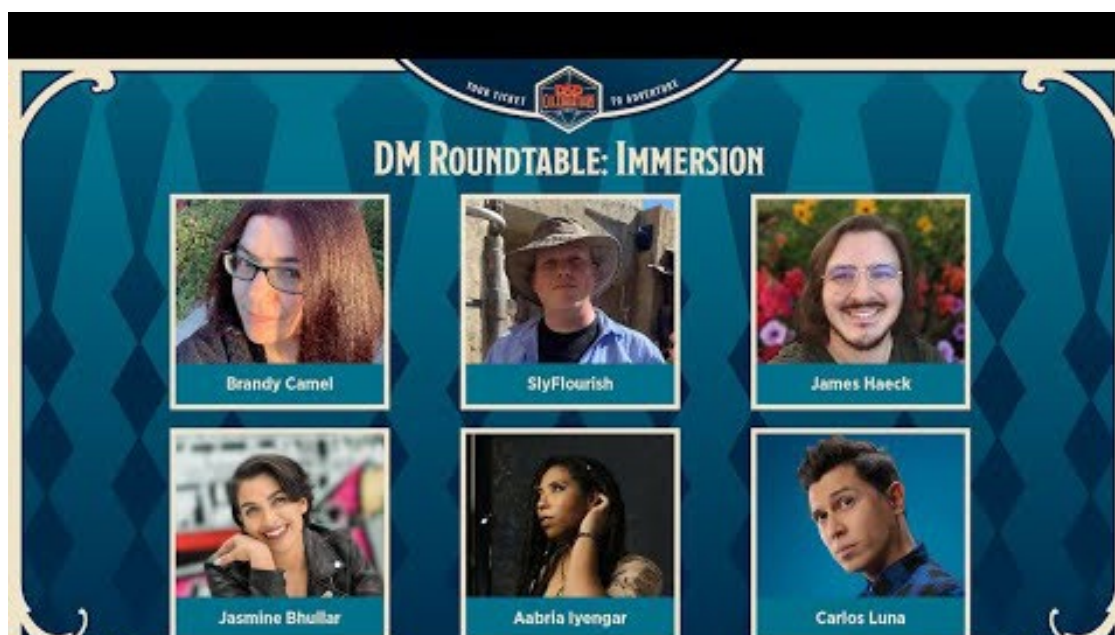
3:00 PM: DM Roundtable: Immersion

Host: Brandy Camel

Panelists: Jasmine Bhullar, James Haeck, Aabria Iyengar, Carlos Luna, Michael Shea (SlyFlourish)

The DM Roundtable returns with a new group of expert Dungeon

Masters sharing their tips, tricks, and secrets! Hosted by Community Lead Brandy Camel, the topic for our latest discussion is immersion. With the release of *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight*, immersing your players in the whimsy and wonder of Dungeons & Dragons is as important as ever, so come learn from the pros!



4:00 PM: The Circus of Sound—a D&D Musical

DM: Kelly D'Angelo

Players: Azie Dungey, Mariah Rose Faith, Jason Charles Miller, Vico Ortiz, Anthony Rapp

The long-awaited D&D musical event is here!



8:00 AM: How to Play Draconic Heroes and Villains
Host: Todd Kenreck



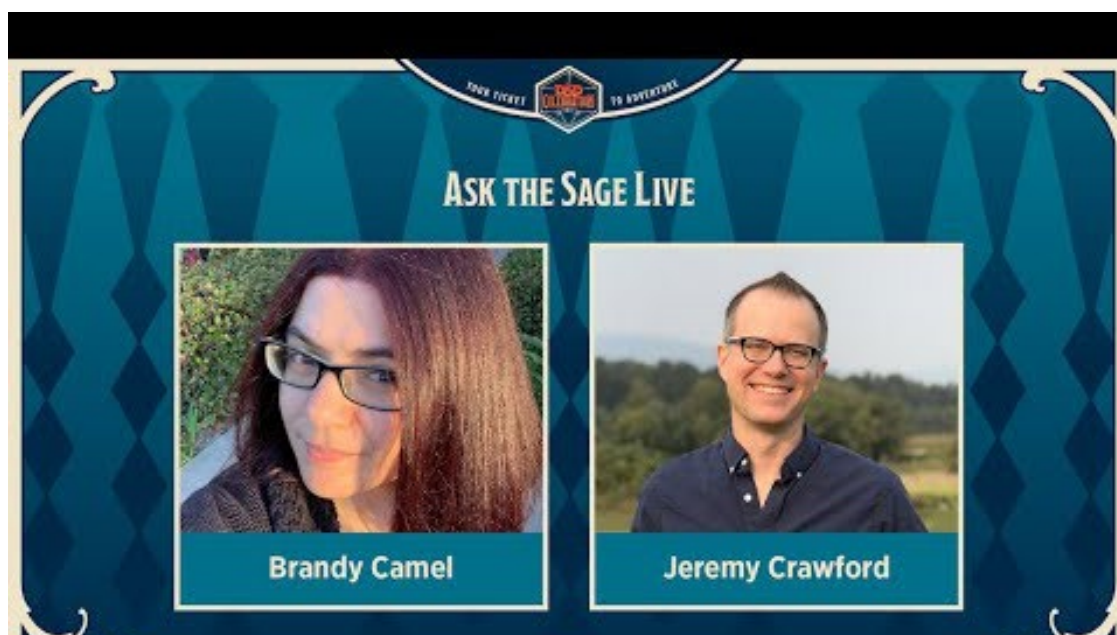
9:00 AM: Demystifying Session 0
Host: Kienna Shaw



10:00 AM: Outlaws & Obelisks: Slowdown Showdown
DM: Jeremy Cobb



12:00 PM: Ask the Sage Live
Host: Brandy Camel
Panelist: Jeremy Crawford



1:00 PM: The Dungeon & The Dragon
DM: B. Dave Walters
Players: Matthew Lillard, Alicia Marie, Patrick Rothfuss, Todd Stashwick, Deborah Ann Woll
An unlikely band of monsters are assembled to help a wronged dragon track down the heroes who stole her hoard, with the cast playing as monsters.



3:00 PM: DM Challenge Winner

The three finalists—Andrew Bishkinskyi, Sergio Solórzano, and Brad Thompson—find out which one of them has scooped the 2021 crown.

3:30 PM: Future of D&D

Host: Elle Osili-Wood

Panelists: Jeremy Crawford, Chris Perkins, Liz Schuh, Ray Winninger

The weekend closes with a look to the future of the world's greatest roleplaying game.



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Character Spotlight: NPCs



Character Spotlight: NPCs

Introducing legendary Magic: The Gathering characters Sivitri and Sol'kanar to fifth edition D&D.

In our previous issue, the **major new collaborative series** that brings together the talents of artist Max Dunbar and writer/editor Adam Lee added *Magic: The Gathering* Planeswalker **Dakkon Shadow Slayer to fifth edition D&D** for the first time. With *Adventures in the Forgotten Realms* now available for both the *Magic: The Gathering* tabletop collectable card game and its **digital edition**, we gave our dynamic duo the opportunity to reimagine two other iconic *Legends* characters. And it won't be the first time dice have been rolled in anger where these two are concerned.

"Sol'kanar the Swamp King, Sivitri Scarzam, and many of the other *Magic: The Gathering Legends* cards came from my Dungeons & Dragons campaign, which took place in a world setting called Austra," explains Steve Conard, co-founder of Wizards of the Coast and one of the designers on the *Magic: The Gathering Legends* set.

"I knew that we needed serious heroes for that collection and our high-level D&D campaigns translated over so easily into *Legends*. Characters such as Dakkon, Sol'kanar, and Sivitri instantly became iconic. And that was the goal."

"Adam and I were interested in putting our own spin on these classic characters, running Sol'kanar and Sivitri Scarzam through our own filter," Max explains.

"I love drawing armor and I've always thought Sivitri and her dragon companion both had a connection to water. In order to make Sivitri's armor look both aquatic and insectoid, I made elements such as her hair, those spines, and the twisting exoskeleton shapes as extreme as possible to push all those elements to the maximum."

Focusing on the aspects of Sivitri's character that make her appear more water-based also allowed Max to extend the same treatment to her dragon companion.

"Because we were going for an ocean vibe, I thought it'd be cool if

the dragon is more snake-like, so I've drawn it to look like a giant eel," he says.

Steve describes Sivitri Scarzam as Austra's top villain, with powers akin to a Sith Lord from the *Star Wars* universe. At 110th-level, the character was rightly feared by the players.

"You notice I keep saying, 'him'?" Steve says with a smile. "I came across the name Sivitri during a world literature class in college. I thought it was a really cool name but I didn't realize it was traditionally a feminine name until I saw a woman behind the counter at McDonald's with 'Sivitri' on her name tag.

"I'd completely forgotten about this when I submitted Sivitri for the *Legends* set. In the early days at Wizards, there was a rule that we weren't allowed to write descriptions for each card. Based upon the name, what we got is what we got. And when Sivitri came back, he was a she."

Continued on next page...

[DOWNLOAD Sivitri Scarzam](#)



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SIVITRI SCARZAM

Sivitri Scarzam was born with the blood of ancient sea dragons flowing through her veins. As a young girl, the ocean called to her, and many times her parents pulled her from its waters after she swam too far into its blue-green depths. As she grew, her sorcerous abilities began to surface with uncontrollable power—the tide would swell and tower before her in the form of a giant serpent, then crash at her feet. Often when this would happen, her eyes would roll back and she would begin speaking an unknown tongue.

People began to fear her, whispering that she was marked by evil. Sivitri did not understand the power that was emerging within her, and was terrified by what she might become. At night her dreams were filled with wild visions of a dark, underwater realm ruled by a scaled serpent that sat coiled in the dark, its cold eyes silently speaking to her, filling her mind with arcane symbols and magical secrets.

Her only refuge was the sea, and each time she entered its soothing depths the world faded into its deep blue void. In the embrace of the ocean Sivitri could know peace away from the chattering crowds and the confusion that clouded her mind. But she was always limited by how long she could hold her breath, her burning lungs forcing her back to the surface and its noise.

She began to stay under longer and longer until one night she entered the sea with no intention of returning to the surface. She surrendered to death. But instead of dying, Sivitri walked through a blinding veil into another realm. She passed into the Dragon Stronghold—an undersea dimension where the Scarzam dragons had created their lair—to find a great sea serpent waiting to reinstate her into the lineage of the ancient sea dragons. Her draconic blood had opened a portal to her birthright and a power beyond death—the ability to walk between worlds.

Sivitri stayed in the dragon's realm to learn magic that filled her blood with energy as she uncovered a history far older than the memory of humanity could fathom. Knowledge of that history instilled her with a purpose. When she emerged from the ocean years later, she was born anew. Her mortal self was long gone and her reign of immortal power had begun.

ITEMS

As a planeswalker, Sivitri has traveled all over the multiverse. And as a master of magic, she's amassed a small trove of magic items (feel free to choose several from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). In addition, here are two iconic items that Sivitri has fashioned herself:

SCARZAM ARMOR

Sivitri created the *Scarzam armor*, forging it in the cold fire located at the center of the Dragon's Stronghold



where Sivitri learned about her draconic bloodline. It has the following properties:

- The *Scarzam armor* magically bonds to the wearer's skin upon attuning, covering it with a flexible but strong chiton, adding +3 to Strength up to a maximum of 21. While wearing this armor, you also gain a +3 bonus to your AC.
- The armor grants the wearer the Amphibious trait, allowing them to breathe air and water.
- The wearer gains a swimming speed of 40 ft.

SCARZAM SADDLE AND BRIDLE

This saddle and bridle were created by Sivitri especially for riding the Scarzam dragon and its magic effects only work on that particular kind of dragon. The saddle is made from shark skin and adheres to the dragon's hide like a barnacle. The bridle is fashioned from silver and is inscribed with magic sigils. The bridle and saddle have the following properties:

- While in the saddle, the rider and the dragon can communicate telepathically.

- While conscious, the rider can't fall off the dragon, even if inverted or swimming underwater. They can be knocked off by an opposing force (such as being buffeted by an air elemental's whirlwind attack).
- While in the saddle, the rider can speak and understand Draconic.

USING SIVITRI IN YOUR GAME

Sivitri Scarzam is a powerful sorcerer and there are many ways she can interact with the characters in your game. She could be looking for an ancient magic item that she needs to attain the next level of power. She could need the assistance of adventurers to lure a foe into her clutches or to acquire an object for her. She could also be the mousetrap that is guarding a very delicious piece of magic cheese that the adventurers are set on stealing from within her tower (or underwater sanctum). Here are a few ideas:

FOIL THE PLAN

While on a search for a powerful magic item, the trail leads the adventurers to Sivitri's island. They must sneak onto her island and attempt to break into her tower and

steal the magic item before she uses it to create a tsunami and wipe out a city. Sivitri has a host of giant crabs, merrow, sharks, and other ocean critters guarding her lair. Those monsters stand in the way, but if the characters are too loud or clumsy in their assault, the ruckus might bring the wrath of Sivitri herself down on their heads.

HEAL THE DRAGON

In this scenario, Sivitri's dragon is dying and she doesn't know how to cure it. When the characters hear of this via a rumor, one of them may remember a dream, a vision, or a story from a venerable grandmother about how to cure the dragon. It may be that they need to get a special blend of herbs that can only be found in certain areas of the world, or they need to procure a special magic item and sacrifice something dear to them to get the antidote that heals the dragon.

DRAGONNAPPED

In this adventure, the Scarzam dragon has been taken to the Abyss by a balor and its demonic host. Sivitri needs some high-level adventurers to help her get it back before the demons roast it over an Abyssal fire.

SIVITRI SCARZAM

Medium Humanoid (Human)

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 171 (18d8 + 90)

Speed 30 ft., Swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	22 (+6)	21 (+5)	25 (+7)	20 (+5)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +13, Int +14, Cha +14

Skills Arcana +14, History +14, Insight +12, Persuasion +14

Damage Resistances poison; lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Aquan, Common, Draconic

Challenge 21 (33,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Amphibious. Sivitri can breathe air and water.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Sivitri fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Benthic Mind. Sivitri is immune to magic that would ascertain her thoughts, truthfulness, alignment, or creature type.

Planeswalker. Sivitri can use an action to cast the *plane shift* spell (no spell slot or components required), targeting herself only, and travel to the chosen plane, or from that plane back to the Material Plane. Once she uses this boon, she can't use it again until she finishes a short rest.

Actions

Multiattack. Sivitri makes four attacks, three attacks with her

chilling hair, deathly claw, and poison quill in any combination, and one spell attack.

Chilling Hair. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) cold damage.

Deathly Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) slashing damage and 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. If hit points are lost this way, Sivitri gains 10 hp.

Poison Quill. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage and 10 (3d6) poison damage.

Spellcasting. Sivitri casts one of the following spells, using CHA as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17, +14 to hit with spell attacks):

At will: *control water*, *frostbite*

3/day each: *lightning bolt*, *wall of water*

2/day each: *cone of cold*, *eye bite*

1/day each: *chain lightning*, *power word stun*

Legendary Actions

Sivitri can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Sivitri regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Swift Move. Sivitri moves up to her speed.

Attack. Sivitri makes one attack with her chilling hair, deathly claw, or poison quill.

Freezing Gaze (Costs 2 Actions). Sivitri can look at one creature. That creature must make a DC 26 Constitution saving throw, taking 44 (8d10) cold damage and be paralyzed for 1 minute on a failed save, or half as much damage and not paralyzed on a successful one.

SCARZAM DRAGON

The Scarzam dragons were once powerful and feared, and all save one have been wiped out. This dragon is now the last of its kind and is bonded to Sivitri by blood. Some claim that Sivitri was the creator of these unique dragons, while others say that long ago the Scarzam dragons foresaw their demise and mingled their blood with humanity, in the hopes that one day the bloodline would bring forth a human who could be a champion of their lineage.

SCARZAM DRAGON

Huge Dragon

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)

Speed 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	19 (+4)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +12, Con +10

Skills Perception +9, Stealth +9

Damage Immunities Cold

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Draconic

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes one Bite attack and one Tail attack. It can choose to replace its Tail attack with its Constrict attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (2d12 + 7) piercing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (2d12 + 7) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 30 feet away from the dragon and knocked prone.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 20 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage and 16 (3d10) lightning damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 20). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the dragon can't constrict another target.

Electric Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales a 60-foot cone of crackling energy. Each creature in that area must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. The dragon moves up to its speed.

Tail. The dragon makes one Tail attack.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon makes one Bite attack.

Character Spotlight: NPCs



“Sol’kanar was one of the more notorious villains in my D&D campaign. Simply put, he was a pit brawler who was constantly messing with the characters,” Steve reveals. “Eventually

one of those characters, Boone Bladeswinger, ended up challenging Sol'kanar. The portals that connected all of the Dungeon Masters' different worlds fed into a shared arena called the Milestone that anyone could visit. It was truly neutral ground and no DM claimed it.

"Boone showed up one day with his entourage and Sol'kanar was there and they went at it. That's how we know what Sol'kanar was carrying, because I found documentation for the items from when the characters were divvying them up after Boone killed him."

"Sol'kanar isn't just an anthropomorphized swamp. He looks like a creature who commands the swamp. I liked the idea that as the Swamp King he might infect everywhere he goes with his presence," Max says.

"With tar-like liquid and brackish water seeping from his feet, and these giant mosquito creatures that emanate from him and infest the world, a swamp would manifest itself around him if he stood in one place long enough. His tentacle vines are part of that same idea."

This primordial demon also carries a club that Max describes as "otherworldly, horrifying, and ancient," and the creative duo worked their magic to bring it to life.

"I wanted to convey the archaic, monolithic elements of this object, almost as if they were ruins that Sol'kanar had picked up and fashioned into a weapon. I was excited to see what Adam would do with that idea, and he didn't disappoint, running with the concept to create an amazing object with terrifying implications."

Check out Adam and Max's previous collaboration for *Dragon+*, which features *Magic: The Gathering* Legend **Dakkon Shadow Slayer!**

DOWNLOAD Sol'kanar the Swamp King

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SOL'KANAR THE SWAMP KING

Sol'kanar was once a nature spirit who dwelled within the island of Corondor. There, in the island's core, he mingled with the other forces of nature—sometimes in conflict, sometimes in harmony—but always with the overall health and well-being of Corondor in mind. Each force shaped the land's geology and filled it with a diversity of life.

But as ill-fortune would have it, a great multiversal war came to Corondor, crushing the island in its grip of madness and throwing everything out of balance. The forces of nature fled deeper into Corondor, but a demon planeswalker singled out Sol'kanar and tore him from the land to use as a living weapon. The benevolent nature spirit was unable to resist the planeswalker's demonic magic, which warped Sol'kanar's mind and twisted him into an instrument of destruction.

In his new demonic form, Sol'kanar saw things through different eyes. His mind was no longer constrained, death and rage were his to wield like an unquenchable fire, and he found himself embracing war and relishing slaughter—the once benevolent force of nature was now fuel for a demonic pyre. But, as with most wars, this conflict eventually moved to another front, leaving only death and ruin in its wake. With nothing more to gain from Corondor's domination, the demon planeswalker left to pursue her wrath and madness elsewhere and Sol'kanar's broken form was discarded and left to rot in the corpse-laden swamps of his home world.

Sol'kanar's spirit did not die, but was taken deep into the soul of Corondor, where the remaining forces of nature formed a confluence of Corondor's energies. There, in the vault of the world, they discussed whether or not to revive Sol'kanar, as his soul would be forever demon-tainted and potentially dangerous. But Corondor had been horribly defiled and the forces of nature had been helpless to stop it. Nature needed a champion. Sol'kanar, it was decided, was to be brought back to life.

The mountain spirits offered up a sacred stone known as the *Heart of the Mountain*, and both the river spirits and those of the great swamp poured their elemental power into it. It was there, deep within Corondor that Sol'kanar was reborn, emerging from the bogs with a burning desire to defend Corondor and destroy any who would dare defile it.

CORONDOR

Corondor is a large island on the plane of Dominaria in the Golthonor Sea. A tremendous mountain chain called The Spine runs down its center, roughly dividing it into Stonehaven to the west, Casindral to the south, and Golthonor to the east, with The Northern Ice Wastes lying above them. It was ground zero of the Planeswalker War where tremendous powers were unleashed.



SOL'KANAR'S ITEMS

Sol'kanar has the following items:

HEART OF THE MOUNTAIN

The *Heart of the Mountain* is a living diamond taken from deep within The Spine mountain range that keeps Sol'kanar alive and stops him becoming a demonic force of destruction. Were it to be removed from his chest, Sol'kanar would turn into a thick, bubbling mass of demonic ichor or become a rampaging servant of the Abyss.

The gem itself is unique and contains the powers of three elemental forces—earth, water, and the decaying power of death. Should someone come into possession of the gemstone, they are able to bring a creature back from the dead as if they had cast the *true resurrection* spell. This can only be used once. If this power is used, the *Heart of the Mountain* embeds itself in the new body of the revived creature. The revived creature now has one use of *true resurrection*.

If the *Heart of the Mountain* is somehow removed from its host, the creature turns to dust.

CORONDOR CRYSTALS

There are numerous crystals embedded in Sol'kanar's body and he may give them as gifts to those who are friends of Corondor. Each crystal acts as a charm (see Supernatural Gifts in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

JAWBONE OF YAWGMOTH

Sol'kanar's club is the gore-encrusted jawbone he tore from an avatar of Yawgmooth in a battle to reclaim Corondor. The bone is seething with demonic life, and growls and gibbers, gnashing its fangs and glaring with its soulless eyes. Other than being a foul, Abyssal artifact, it has the following properties:

- It can warn Sol'kanar of approaching danger. It can sense any living creature, size Medium or larger, up to 120 ft. away. If it senses a living creature, it chatters aggressively until Sol'kanar commands it to be quiet (which it does reluctantly).
- On Sol'kanar's command, the jawbone's eyes all focus on one target and issue forth a blast of necrotic energy that deals 36 (8d8) necrotic damage.

USING SOL'KANAR IN YOUR GAME

Sol'kanar is bound to his island kingdom of Corondor, which can be used in any fashion in your game. It could be a place where the characters are shipwrecked, or it could be a place where an item is hidden.

If you'd like to use the rich history from the *Magic: The Gathering* storyline, Corondor is a place still recovering after the devastation of a terrible war, so all manner of latent magic, mysterious weapons, cool artifacts, and wrecked war machines could be buried there.

Sol'kanar is a fierce defender of his land, so any untoward activity on Corondor is sure to pique his ire, and few survive his wrath. However, there could be things that Sol'kanar needs to bring stability and peace back to his land. Although he is a demon, Sol'kanar's chaotic nature is kept in check by the *Heart of the Mountain*, which allows him to hold on to some of his original essence—a spirit of nature who cares for his kingdom.

HEALING CORONDOR

The land of Corondor could have been violently wounded in the great battles where weapons of immense arcane power were used. These wounds might only be able to be healed by magic from elsewhere. Sol'kanar is unable to leave his island's shores—the characters are his only hope of bringing a close to a turbulent past.

SOL'KANAR, KING OF CORONDOR

Large Fiend (Demon)

Armor Class 23

Hit Points 270 (20d10 + 160)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	15 (+2)	27 (+8)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +15, Con +15, Wis +10

Skills Intimidation +16, Nature +17, Perception +10

Damage Resistances cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities lightning, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, stunned

Senses darkvision 120 ft. passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 24 (62,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Sol'kanar fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Lightning Absorption. Whenever Sol'kanar is subjected to lightning damage, he takes no damage and regains a number of hit points equal to the lightning damage dealt.

Actions

Multiaction. Sol'kanar makes three attacks: two with his *Jawbone of Yawgmooth*, and one with his mouthing tentacles or necrotic bolt:

Jawbone of Yawgmooth. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage and 13 (3d8) necrotic damage.

Necrotic Bolt. Sol'kanar emits a blast of necrotic energy from his *Jawbone of Yawgmooth* in a 60-foot line that is 5 ft. wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Mouthing Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 25 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 21) if it is a Huge or smaller creature. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Sol'kanar can't use the same tentacle on another target. Sol'kanar has three tentacles.

Blood Drain. As a bonus action, Sol'kanar can force one creature grappled by a tentacle to make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 22 (4d10) necrotic damage, and Sol'kanar regains that many hit points.

Legendary Actions

Sol'kanar can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Sol'kanar regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Swift Move. Sol'kanar moves up to his speed.

Attack. Sol'kanar makes a *Jawbone of Yawgmooth* attack.

Festering Swarm (Costs 2 Actions). Each creature within 20 feet of Sol'kanar takes 10 (3d6) piercing damage, and 27 (6d8) necrotic damage from the swarm of blood-sucking flies that live in his hide.



D&D x NERDS: Restoring Harmony

The sweet little sparks of the confectionary world join forces with the world's greatest roleplaying game!

by Mira Manga

D &D Live 2021 delivered more than **celeb-packed games**, it also dropped some sweet news—including the collaboration between Dungeons & Dragons and NERDS. You may already have seen special **D&D x NERDS** packs wherever you buy snacks for game night, and they can unlock exclusive adventures featuring the cute, confectionery NERDS critters as playable characters!

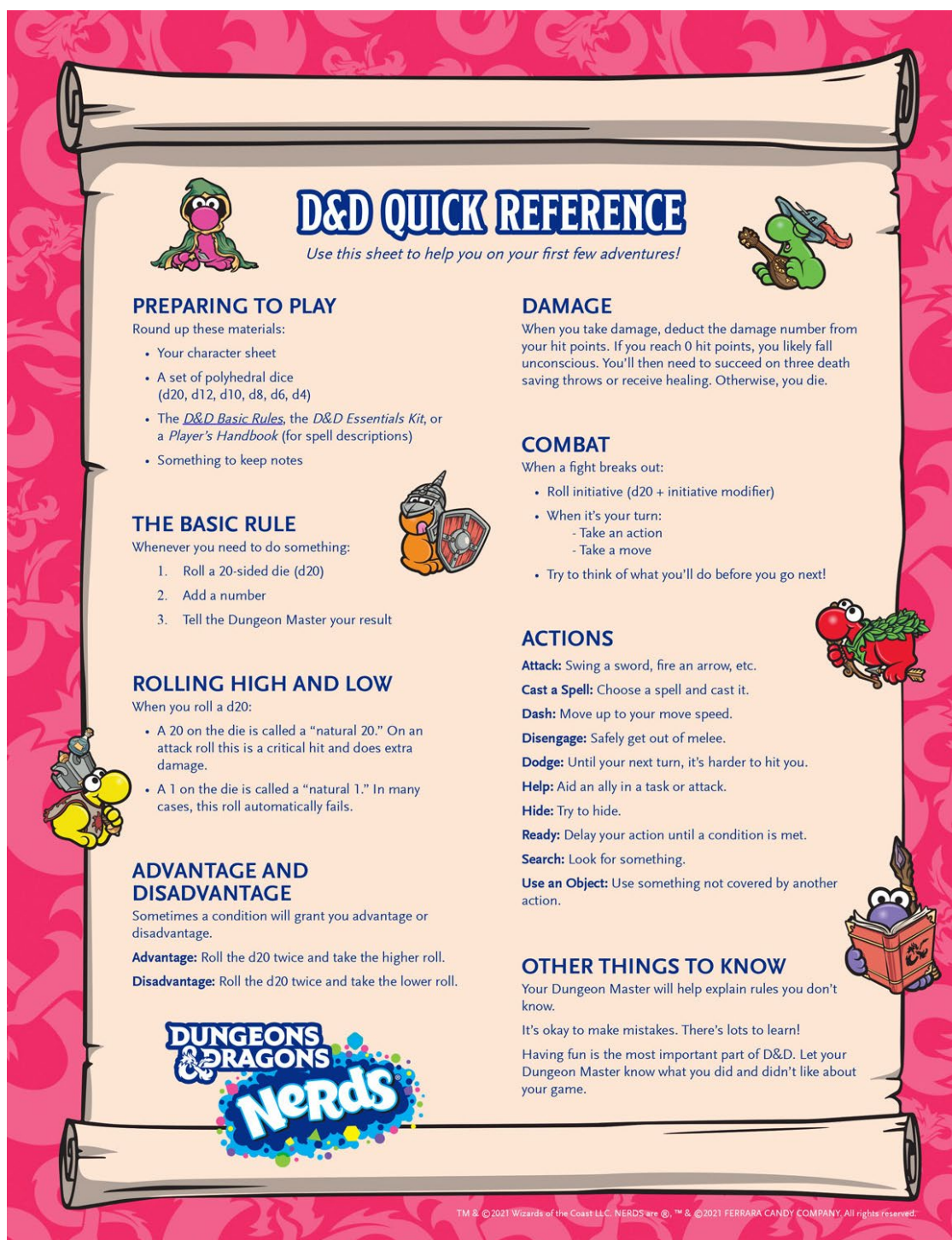
Veteran RPG designer and *d20 Dames* Dungeon Master Kat Kruger was tasked with creating these mouthwateringly excellent adventures. With her experience as a YA author, her awesome storytelling and DM skills, as well as freelance game design at her company **Steampunk Unicorn Studio**, she was an ideal choice for this NERDStastic D&D quest.



“It all started way back in elementary school, when I picked up a book that taught you how to code your own text adventures,” she reminisces, mapping out the epic journey that led to this point. “I loved playing games such as *Colossal Cave Adventure* and *Zork*, and this book taught me how to create my own adventures, so I would write them for myself and my sister to play.”

Those early explorations lit a spark that would fan the flames of a lifelong love of writing games. When Kat became a YA author, following roles in broadcasting and publishing, she found herself appearing as a guest speaker at the **Hal-Con** sci-fi, fantasy and gaming convention in Halifax, Canada. It was here that she first met Product Manager for D&D Play, **Chris Tulach** (now her partner, with baby Grayson also joining the party in 2018). As a new convert to D&D, Kat was smitten.

“Chris set up a tutorial showing how to play Dungeons & Dragons, and I instantly fell in love with the game!” she remembers. “It reminded me of the text adventures that I wrote as a kid. I saw so much potential for storytelling and collaboration.”



(select to view)

Her early steps into the game saw her DMing the *Lost Mines of Phandelver*, and by the time her party had defeated the Black Spider, she was hooked. She designed and taught some Dungeons & Dragons workshops for a youth organization, and after connecting with comic-book creator Jen Vaughn, a fellow Seattleite and D&D enthusiast, the *d20 Dames* actual play podcast was born.

“When the opportunity to work on the NERDS collaboration came

along, it was a ‘Wow!’ moment for me,” Kat confides “NERDS were my favorite candy growing up and D&D is my favorite game. When Shelly Mazzanoble pitched it to me, my reply was instant: ‘Yes! Whatever I need to do to make this work it’s a yes!’”

HOW DOES IT WORK

The D&D x NERDS collaboration gives candy lovers an easy entry to Dungeons & Dragons. Consumers who purchase participating products can upload their receipt to nerdscandy.com/dnd to unlock a level 1 D&D NERD character sheet and one of six mini adventures that teaches the basics of D&D. The next time a consumer redeems a receipt, it unlocks the next party member and another mini adventure, and so on. Once all party members have been unlocked, the ultimate adventure begins! The six characters advance to 3rd level and embark on a final seventh adventure designed for a whole party.



The D&D x NERDS *Restoring Harmony* series begins in the city of Harmony, which has been experiencing a strange case of color outages. Rumors are flying around about what might be causing the problem and the NERDS must use their unique abilities as they seek to figure out what’s happening. Along the way they’ll encounter some iconic Dungeons & Dragons monsters.

While the seven adventures include all three pillars of Dungeons & Dragons play, the emphasis is on social interaction and exploration over combat. Running a family-friendly D&D podcast helped arm Kat for the writing task in hand, and the *Restoring Harmony* series has been designed to be a fun, collaborative adventure tapping into the magic of NERDS.

“Each adventure explains that there are always solutions that don’t

involve combat, and suggests ways to keep the nature of the gameplay more benevolent. There is an option to befriend, so there's no need for tears at the table!" Kat advises.

"The themes are written in a way that ensures everyone is having fun. Some kids want to experience more storytelling, others want to fight monsters. It's the same advice I give to any DM: make sure you know what your players want."

The first six adventures are written for a single player and Dungeon Master, so they're perfect for anyone getting an introduction to the rules of D&D and learning how to play. But experienced players will also find the storyline to be a real treat.



There are six different color NERDS characters, (learn more about them on the *Meet the NERDS* section of the official website), each with their own distinct personality traits, which helped inform their D&D classes. For example, the Pink NERD is curious and becomes a rogue, while the Green NERD is humorous and embodies a charismatic bard. This well-rounded, candy crew also features the Red NERD as a ranger, the Yellow NERD as a cleric, the Orange NERD as a fighter, and the Purple NERD as a wizard, eventually forming the ultimate adventuring party.

To challenge these colorful characters, Kat has selected classic monsters from the D&D roster for them to encounter on their quests. Players will meet the nefarious duo of Emo the beholder and his brutish sidekick Mr. Greystone, alongside beloved baddies such as kobolds, twig blights, oozes, skeletons, and more. It's up to them to

figure out Emo's dastardly schemes and put a stop to them.

The seventh and final adventure in the series provides a suitably epic finale, as all six NERDS experience the power of collaboration and join together to save the day. Kat can't help but draw a comparison with her experiences of working with the D&D Team to bring the project to life.

"There were a lot of people involved in the making of this. I handled the initial design, developer Adam Lee added some really great pieces to it, my partner Chris helped create the character sheets, Shelly oversaw everything, and we had amazing editors, too. It's been an incredible journey altogether," she says.

The **D&D x NERDS *Restoring Harmony* promotion**, featuring exclusive Dungeons & Dragons content, runs globally from September 1, 2021 to December 2021.

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The Best of the Dungeon Masters Guild

This issue we investigate paladin oaths and chat with creator Darren Kenny about his designs for subclasses.

by Fiona Howat



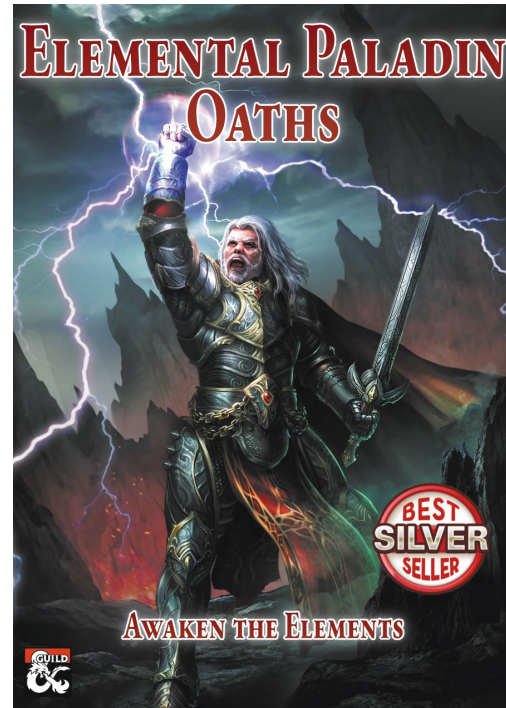
Paladins are the steadfast stalwarts of justice and righteousness, bound by their holy oaths to stand against evil in all its forms. Such oaths give these blessed warriors the divine power to judge right from wrong and magic abilities to carry out their sacred duties. That said, oaths can be granted by any sympathetic being of momentous power, not just the traditional deities of good alignment. Some oaths' powers may even stem from an individual's own strength of will and purpose.

We've picked out some of our favorite homebrew paladin oaths and class options from the DMs Guild, which give a new perspective on

this traditional fantasy archetype.

Elemental Paladin Oaths—A 5th Edition Paladin Oath Collection
by Darren Kenny
Price: \$2.99 (PDF)

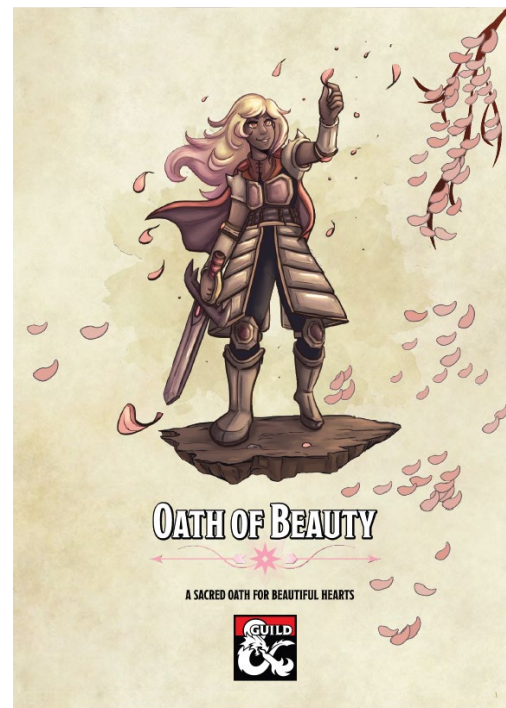
“While the Gods bring law and order into the world, there are those who serve the primal deities and innumerable Gods of nature...” These elemental oaths embody both the power of the elements and what they represent, giving their devoted champions a diverse skill set. Some of the more unusual oaths here include the Oath of the Renewing Embers (with the tenet of enduring and everlasting hope, inspiring others even in the darkest times), and the Oath of Still Grasses (with the tenets of patience and peace, using violence as a last resort).



[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

Oath of Beauty: A sacred oath for beautiful hearts by Teddy South
Price: \$3.00 (PDF)

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Taking the time to stop and smell wildflowers... toasting to the good health and glad tidings of your friends at midwinter; even ringing in the new year at a raucous concert and singing your heart out; all of these things can be seen as a form of worship to those that share this oath’s ideals.” This

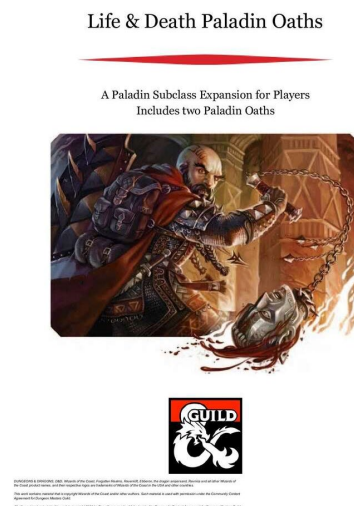


oath is for heroes who wish to live life to the fullest and enjoy its fleeting moments of beauty. We particularly like the Divine Beauty class feature, where paladins become an avatar of ethereal beauty, charming their foes so that they are overcome with weeping emotion!

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

Life & Death Paladin Oaths by
Zane Kenyon
Price: PWYW Suggested \$1.25
(PDF)

These two paladin subclasses act like two sides of the same coin. The Oath of Death calls to paladins who seek destruction and control over death, crushing the forces of life and those who twist the inevitable fate given to all. The Oath of Life, on the other hand, calls to paladins who believe that all life is worth saving, no matter how evil, and only use violence as a final option. What particularly stands out with these subclasses are their auras: The Aura of Vitality



has the ability to heal; while the Aura of Dying prevents death at a cost.

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

Oath of Enlightenment by Dakota Cash
Price: PWYW (PDF)

Paladins who take the Oath of Enlightenment value learning and understanding above all: “They are more akin to a security force chosen by their deity to protect knowledge. To them, knowledge, science, technology, magic, and religion are intertwined and it is their sworn duty to protect those bookish intellectuals who often cannot protect themselves.” The unique channel divinity ability, Tell No Lies, allows such paladins to help dictate how combat encounters play out, as they compel their enemies to tell the truth about their next action during a fight.

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

Oath of Delusion—Paladin
Subclass by Morgan Carpenter
Price: \$2.00 (PDF)

Inspired by Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* (and its musical adaption *The Man of La Mancha*), the Oath of Delusion has its defenders wrapping themselves in the idealistic world of the chivalrous knights of old. Devotees have immersed themselves so deeply into the

OATH OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Paladin Sub-Class

Introduction: This is a brand new subclass for paladins. Although knowledge deities exist, even those that hoard knowledge, none of the paladin oaths are really capable of serving a paladin of such a deity. This is an attempt to create just that.

BY DAKOTA CASH

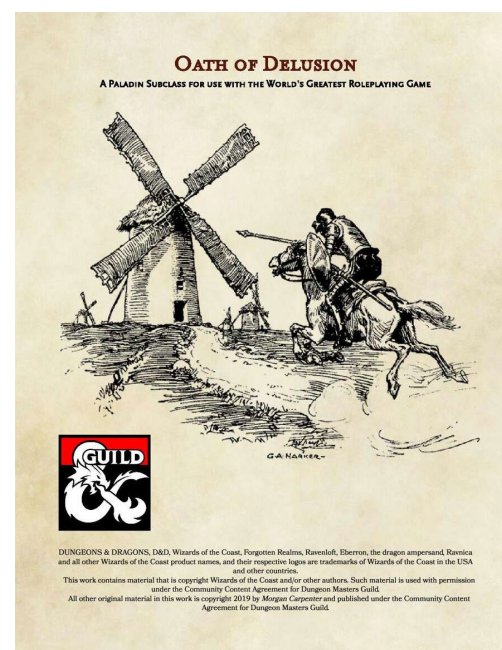


DISCLAIMER: A WARNING: Only Wizards of the Coast® Products should be used in conjunction with the Dungeons & Dragons® game. Wizards of the Coast® is not responsible for any damage or loss of game materials or equipment caused by the use of this document. This document is provided as a service to the community and is not intended for sale. Any reproduction or distribution of this document without the express written permission of the author is prohibited.

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Oath of Enlightenment



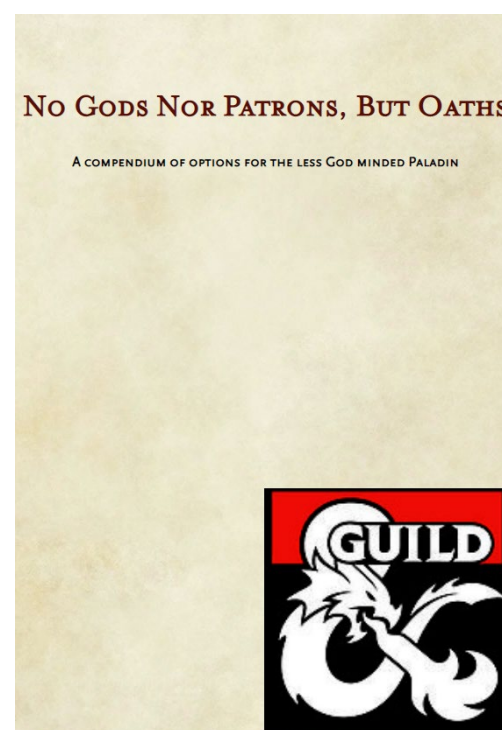


world of these adventurers that they have convinced themselves they are a similar hero, regardless of their true circumstances. This oath introduces the To Each His Dulcinea class feature, where heroes gain a leadership score which allows them (when their delusions are proving not to be so delusional!) to attract minor ‘followers’ as allies in their endeavors.

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

No Gods Nor Patrons, but Oaths
by JankyAss Games
Price: PWYW Suggested \$1.19
(PDF)

A compendium of subclass options and oaths for paladins who find themselves of a more individualist bent, holding true as a defender of an ideal, a community or a ruler. Particular subclass options of note include the Oath of Civilization, for paladins who see themselves as protectors of fledgling townships against the wilderness of the frontier, and the Oath of

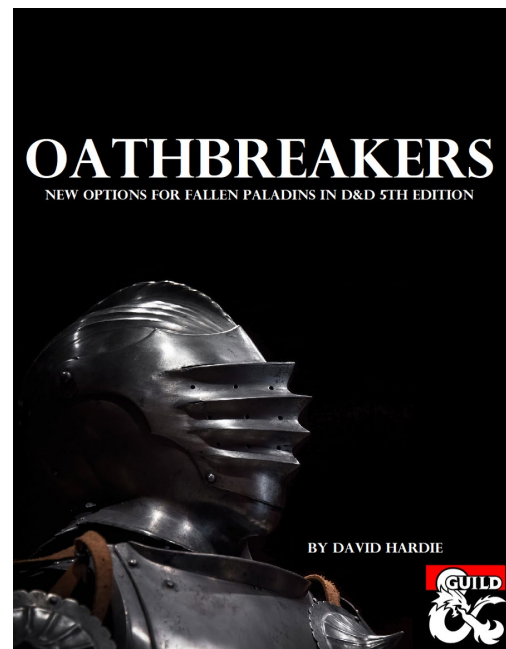


Tomfoolery, for good humored defenders of everything jovial.

[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

Oathbreaker: New Options for
fallen paladins in D&D 5th edition
by David Hardie
Price: \$1.50 (PDF)

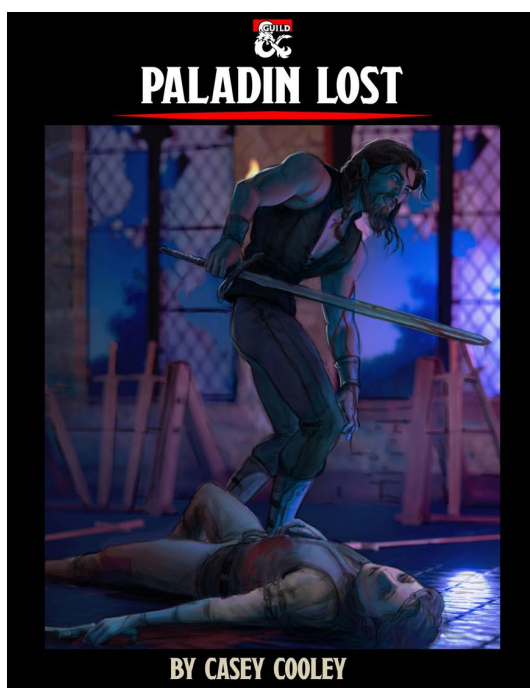
“To fall is merely to rise again.”
On rare occasions, a paladin may
go against their chosen path and
break their oath. David
Hardie presents five new
subclasses, each one representing
an alternate path a paladin might
take after “falling from grace”.
This sourcebook also
recontextualizes the original
Oathbreaker class (from the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*), and provides
short questionnaires for each subclass to ensure players get the most
out of each option.



[DOWNLOAD PDF](#)

Download Paladin Lost for free!

A festive atmosphere has
taken hold of Ardwyn Keep!
Lord Tyron Drest’s eldest son
Levi is to be married to Lady
Serena Archgate in just two
days’ time, and final
preparations are hurriedly
being completed to ensure a
smooth start to the
celebrations. Who better to
help keep the peace and



entertain the guests than a group of seasoned adventurers! With everyone's spirits this high, what could possibly go wrong?

Casey Cooley's investigation-focused mystery can be undertaken by parties of any size and characters of any level. *Dragon+* is offering you the chance to download the PDF version of *Paladin Lost*, by clicking the link below. It will remain free until the next issue of *Dragon+* is released. Enjoy!

[DOWNLOAD THE FREE PDF](#)

Q&A: DESIGNER DARREN KENNY

Darren Kenny is an Irish game designer and software developer, who has written and contributed to many bestselling DMs Guild publications. His work includes *Dark Masters—A 5th Edition Warlock Patron Collection* (featured in *Dragon+* #38), *Elemental Paladin Oaths—A 5th Edition Paladin Oath Collection*, and, most recently, 'Marvelous Archetypes: Ultimate Edition'. You can follow him on [Twitter](#)



Darren Kenny

and check out his portfolio on the [Dungeon Masters Guild](#).

What made you want to write your own archetypes and subclass options for the DMs Guild?

Originally, I started creating subclasses for my friends' character ideas simply because they didn't really exist yet in Dungeons & Dragons. I started out by creating subclass options for a blood magic barbarian, a time wizard, a divine-powered hunter, and so on. When I was introduced to the Dungeon Masters Guild—thanks to *Critical Role*'s Matthew Mercer—I decided to start putting my creations up online for others! It was thanks to the support and encouragement of my partner Diane and my friend Conor that I found the confidence to do that.

What are your biggest influences when it comes to designing subclasses? And where do you turn if you need inspiration?

I'm inspired to create by anything and everything. I've taken inspiration from movies, TV shows, games, comics, anime, and manga. I've made a number of lore-friendly conversions of content from vastly different worlds and genres. For instance, I converted the Soul Reaper from *Bleach* into my Grave Warden class, the Witcher into my Balancer class and the Saiyans of *Dragon Ball Z* into my Wielder class. I have a lot more planned that still need converting, I just need to find the time to do it!

How long does it take to create an archetype?

The first draft is usually a frantic, wonderful blur of typing. My ideas often all come pouring out in the first few hours of a project. That's my favorite part of the process. I love the pure creation without worry, before you go back and edit.

Your Elemental Paladin Oaths collection mixes environmental elements with their associated emotional counterparts in a very cool way. Do you have a favorite oath from that collection?

I'm a huge fan of the Oath of Embers, which focuses on a mix of healing and fire. I particularly enjoy the visual of resparking the embers of a fallen ally's life into a roaring fire. It's also the first oath someone messaged me about to tell me how much they enjoyed it, so that might contribute a little to my love for it!

You have also written subclass options inspired by subject matter

as varied as the seven deadly sins and comic-book superhero archetypes. Are there any other genres or themes you think might make an interesting starting point for an archetype?

Anime is such a fun thing to convert into fifth edition content because occasionally you find things match up so well that it's uncanny. I recently converted characters from the *Demon Slayers* anime into a class and it was effortless, as every part of their lore and fighting style was easily transferred to D&D.

You have written archetypes for all fifth edition classes in one form or another. Is there a particular class you enjoy creating for?

I'm a big fan of clerics and paladins because almost anything can be created for them. You could flip to any page of the dictionary and make an oath or domain! That said, I have a soft spot for fighters. There's nothing quite as fantastic as a fighter with unusual powers, such as the Echo Knight or Arcane Archer.

What tips would you give someone looking to create their own class archetypes?

Just start. Your first creation won't be perfect, but you need to start creating to improve! The more you make, the better you get. My best piece of advice would be to make the things you want to see in the game and at your table. The balancing, editing, and publishing can all come later down the line.

What future projects are you working on?

I'm creating my first ever Kickstarter project called *Fallen World*, which is both exciting and terrifying. I've also got a few recently released projects where I've collaborated with other creators and I'm very excited about those. One of those is a new patron system for D&D based on Ravnica, as well as a book of beholders!

DESIGN THOUGHT: CREATING YOUR OWN PALADIN OATHS

While traditionally a paladin's abilities often come from a sympathetic higher power, paladins can dedicate themselves to pretty much anything they put their minds to—a cause, an ideal or a pursuit.

When thinking about creating your own unique paladin oath, a good starting point is to consider what tenets the oath will have. These are beliefs, principles or calls to action which followers of the oath must embody in order to receive and maintain their divine gifts. Most paladin oaths will have, ideally, between two and four tenets, with each one having a sentence or two detailing what they mean. Any more than four tenets may overcomplicate an oath, making it strict and uncompromising.

While it's important to keep oath tenets short, they should also be vague and open to interpretation, so that players can create a range of interesting characters who are bound by the oath without being coerced into one particular style of play. Paladin narratives often flourish when faced with matters that aren't straightforward from a moral point of view.

If you are struggling to think of any good tenets, consider interesting tropes associated with either the theme or the tone of the oath you're creating. For example, an oath based on cooking and good food (the Oath of Fine Dining) might come with tenets such as 'Exquisite taste', 'Palate cleanser', 'Follow the recipe' and so on.



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D&D Classics

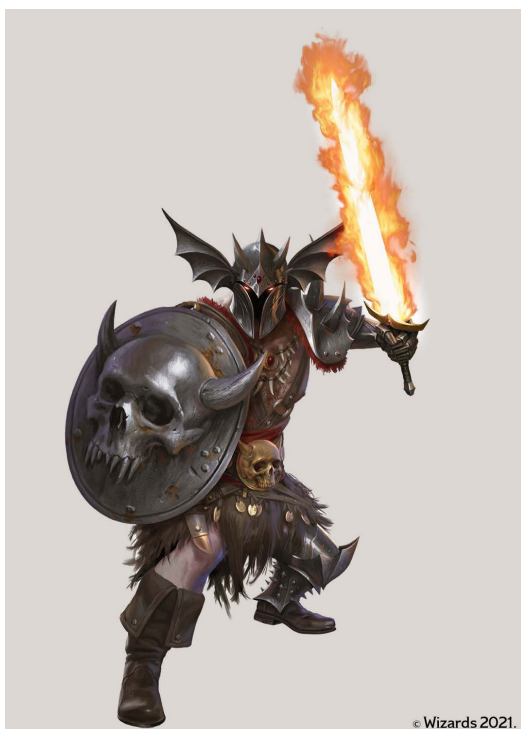
He wears a winged helm, half a pair of armored pants, and makes his triumphant return in The Wild Beyond the Witchlight. Not Strongheart on laundry day—it's Warduke!

by Bart Carroll

“Hulking, strangely armored on one half of his body, garbed in a fiendish, red-eyed helm... just who is this human fighter known as Warduke?”

So began my previous *D&D Alumni* article about this character, written in... [*checks date*] wait, that can't be right—2006? Wow. Well, *something* must have captured my imagination about this guy all these years!

Perhaps it's a fascination with masked figures who say little, if anything: Warduke. Boba Fett. Snake Eyes. All ninjas, to be honest. Throw in Dakkon



Warduke (Select to view)

Blackblade and Snake Plissken too, if helmets and eyepatches count as masking. (There’s even some great etymology in play, with the word *mask* derived from the Latin word *masca*, meaning specter or nightmare.) As visually compelling characters, they never needed to say much—after all, chatty ninjas haven’t seemed to catch on as a particularly effective character build.

As mentioned in this issue’s *Welcome Letter*, I collected the ’80s AD&D action figures as a kid, including Strongheart, Warduke, and Kelek. I’m thrilled to see their return in *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight* along with other characters from the toy line. The campaign storyline involves a Feywild-infused carnival, and so bringing back this connection with the ’80s animated series seems wonderfully apt (and as a longstanding fan of these characters, altogether delightful).

Within the adventure, parties might encounter Kelek and Warduke as members of the League of Malevolence, as well as Strongheart within the Valor’s Call collection of heroes (organizational names that Chris Perkins says were meant to evoke something of the ’80s campy feel). While appearing in the animated series, their first incarnations within the roleplaying game came as a set of set of pregenerated characters in 1983’s *The Shady Dragon Inn*, followed by 1984’s *Quest for the Heartstone* adventure—material Chris Perkins used as a starting point for their fifth edition versions.

Not everyone made the cut this time around, though. When it came to picking teams, if two characters filled a similar niche—as was the case with Warduke and Grimsword—Chris picked the more recognizable of the two. (“Poor Grimsword! He doesn’t even wield a

sword.”)

“I was handed their stats and asked to write an adventure for them, which I did gladly,” *Quest for the Heartstone* designer Michael L. Gray noted when asked about these characters. “The characters were developed to be action figures of each character class.”

And when it came to the characters’ names? “Molliver was named after my daughter Molly. Warduke was named after Duke Seifried, who spearheaded the figure production overseas.”

[Download the *Quest for the Heartstone* character stats PDF](#)

While most of the other characters faded from the spotlight over time, Warduke managed to remain (perhaps there’s a shared fascination with masked characters). Featured on the cover of *Dungeon* magazine #105 (December 2003), he reappeared in higher-level form as a critical threat—with elevated stats to match: S 32, I 13, W 15, D 16, Cn 28, Ch 20. His original *sword +1* (flames on command) became a *+3 anarchic flaming burst human bane bastard sword*, with his other possessions listed as a *+3 moderate fortification adamantine ceremonial spiked half-plate*, *+5 bashing heavy steel shield*, *amulet of health +6*, *gauntlets of giant strength +6*, *boots of speed*, *ring of protection +3*, and a *dagger of venom*.

Phew! Heavy is the sack that carries the loot, should this version of Warduke ever be defeated. If anything, he might fit better in **the high-powered campaigns** that spawned Dakkon, Sol’kanar, and Sivitri, presented in their latest forms elsewhere this issue and in *Dragon* **+ #38**.

It was this appearance that inspired his return in the 2006 *D&D Minis War Drum* expansion (prompting the earlier *D&D Alumni* article). As Matthew Sernett noted, it was Warduke’s depiction in *Dungeon* that drove his inclusion as a D&D mini. The article even mentioned the possibility of Strongheart

appearing in a future set—and while that never came to pass back then, Strongheart finally does reappear as a miniature in **WizKids’ Valor’s Call starter set**.



Strongheart (Select to view)

However, Chris Perkins based *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight’s* Warduke (along with the other toy line characters) on their earlier incarnations; a necessity given the level range of the adventure. “If their challenge ratings were too low,” Chris says, “we pumped them up slightly, usually by increasing their hit points or damage output, or by giving them abilities like Second Wind. The originals were overloaded with magic items, so we pared those down a bit.”

Along with a few necessary adjustments to their stats, elements of the characters’ backstories were also updated. Strongheart’s sword, formerly *Purlblade*, has been redubbed *Steel*, for example. And the original story about Strongheart and Warduke being former friends (“Which I like,” Chris notes) may have made them fun to run as player characters forced to work together in *Quest for the Heartstone*. However, in *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight*, they are presented as nonplayer characters—and their former friendship is no longer noted.

“The DM can flesh out their backstories as needed, but to me, it was more important to describe them in terms of how they interact with the player characters—who are the heroes and focus of the story—and how they interact with their colleagues.” However, Chris did add a few new flourishes, such as the fractiousness of the League of Malevolence and Elkhorn’s refusal to retire. He may have first arrived in D&D more than 35 years ago, but with the average lifespan of a dwarf being some 350 years, we don’t see Elkhorn retiring

anytime soon, either!

Further Options and Ideas

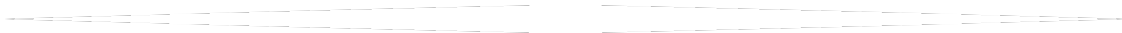
- One of my first assignments for Wizards of the Coast was creating a *Star Wars Miniatures* scenario, called “The Theft of Vader’s Helmet”. In it, Han Solo was presumed to have snuck onboard the *Executor* while Vader was occupied inside his meditation egg, in order to steal his helmet. Chris Perkins *may* have called me into his office at some point to question the silliness... Still, in similar fashion I propose a new quest to locate and restore the other half of Warduke’s chainmail pants! Did he lose them? Do they need to be re-crafted? Are they worn by a secret twin sibling or some other nemesis? And would combining both halves create some sort of super-pants (like He-Man’s Sword of Power)?
- As far as carnival prizes go, some Witchlight Carnival games should most definitely offer small, stuffed unicorns. And/or toy versions of barbarian clubs used to play the game themselves.
- Characters might seek to join Valor’s Call (or even the League of Malevolence). What tasks might Strongheart set for them to test the merits of their admission? Characters might also be inspired to start their own organization (I propose The League of Many Short Rests), and gain advice and encouragement from Valor’s Call members.

The Wild Beyond the Witchlight is available now at your **local game store**, bookstores such as **Barnes & Noble**, **Books-a-Million**, or online at retailers such as **Amazon**. A digital edition is also available at **D&D Beyond** and **Roll20**.

XL1: Quest for the Heartstone is **available at the DMs Guild**, including more details on the ’80s toy line.

Also look for WizKids: **Valor’s Call Starter Set** and **League of Malevolence Starter Set** to see these characters in miniature form. Plus, Funko Pop! revealed their large-headed take on Warduke (**a Gamestop exclusive**)! You can also find a number of

Warduke shirts available, through [Heroes & Villains](#), and this version from [80sTees](#) that Editor-in-Chief Matt Chapman gifted me in 2020 for the holidays!



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PREROLLED * These characters are based on the Official **ADVANCED DUNGEONS CHARACTERS** - & **DRAGONS™** Action Toy figures produced by LJN Toys, Ltd.



STRONGHEART™

Good Paladin*

Lawful 10th Level Lord (fighter)

Strength	13	Dexterity	12
Intelligence	12	Constitution	11
Wisdom	13	Charisma	17

Armor Class	2	Hit Points	68
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Weapons: dagger; intelligent lawful sword +2 (Intelligence - 8, detect evil, healing - 6 hit points per day)

Armor: plate mail; shield; helmet



MERCION™

Good Cleric Female*

Lawful Elder (7th level cleric)

Strength	10	Dexterity	9
Intelligence	12	Constitution	9
Wisdom	17	Charisma	17

Armor Class	2	Hit Points	35
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Weapon: mace +1

Armor: plate mail; shield



PERALAY™
Fighter Mage Elf*

Lawful 10th Level Lord Wizard (elf)

Strength	14	Dexterity	14
Intelligence	15	Constitution	17
Wisdom	10	Charisma	14

Armor Class	1	Hit Points	72
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Weapons: sword +2; dagger; longbow and 15 arrows

Armor: chain mail +3; shield

Additional Language: Ogre

Spellbook:

First level: charm person, light, magic missile, read languages, read magic, shield

Second level: detect invisible, invisibility, mirror image, web, wizard lock

Third level: dispel magic, fireball, hold person, lightning bolt, water breathing

Fourth level: charm monster, confusion, wall of fire

Fifth level: cloudkill

ELKHORN™
Good Dwarf Fighter*

Lawful Dwarven Champion (7th level)

Strength	9	Dexterity	13
Intelligence	9	Constitution	16
Wisdom	10	Charisma	11

Armor Class	2	Hit Points	67
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Weapons: sword +1; hand axe; dagger

Armor: plate mail; shield, helmet



RINGLERUN™
Good Wizard*

Lawful Sorcerer (7th level magic-user)

Strength	9	Dexterity	10
Intelligence	14	Constitution	9
Wisdom	13	Charisma	11

Armor Class	9	Hit Points	23
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Weapons: dagger +1; staff power (21 charges left)

Armor: ring of protection +1

Additional Language: Hobgoblin

Spellbook:

First level: charm person, detect magic, magic missile, read magic, sleep

Second level: ESP, knock, levitate, web

Third level: dispel magic, fireball, haste

Fourth level: ice storm/wall



FIGGEN™ Halfling

Lawful Sheriff (8th level halfling)

Strength	13	Dexterity	13
Intelligence	10	Constitution	12
Wisdom	9	Charisma	10

Armor Class	2	Hit Points	45
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Weapons: dagger +2; short sword; sling and 20 stones

Armor: plate mail; shield; helmet; elvencloak

MOLLIVER

Lawful Thief (8th level)

Strength	9	Dexterity	16
Intelligence	10	Constitution	16
Wisdom	9	Charisma	17

Armor Class 7 Hit Points 40

Weapons: sword +2; two daggers

Armor: leather +1; boots of levitation



HAWKLER™

Good Ranger*

Lawful Myrmidon (6th level fighter)

Strength	13	Dexterity	16
Intelligence	11	Constitution	13
Wisdom	10	Charisma	12

Armor Class 7 Hit Points 45

Weapons: long bow; 12 arrows +1;
sword +1; dagger

Armor: leather



DEETH™

Good Fighter*

Lawful Superhero (8th level fighter)

Strength	12	Dexterity	13
Intelligence	11	Constitution	16
Wisdom	13	Charisma	14

Armor Class 2 Hit Points 58

Weapons: flail +2 (damage 1d8+2);
sword +2

Armor: plate mail; shield; helmet;
scarab of protection



BOWMARC™

Good Crusader*

Lawful Champion (7th level fighter)

Strength	11	Dexterity	12
Intelligence	9	Constitution	13
Wisdom	10	Charisma	12

Armor Class 2 Hit Points 45

Weapons: battle axe +1; sword +1

Armor: plate mail; shield; helmet;
gauntlets of ogre power



VALKEER™

Good Norseman*

Lawful Swashbuckler (5th level fighter)

Strength	16	Dexterity	16
Intelligence	12	Constitution	12
Wisdom	11	Charisma	12
Armor Class	6	Hit Points	39

Weapons: sword +1; war hammer;
hand axe

Armor: leather; shield; helmet



GRIMSWORD™

Evil Knight*

Chaotic Champion (7th level fighter)

Strength	15	Dexterity	13
Intelligence	10	Constitution	12
Wisdom	9	Charisma	7

Armor Class	2	Hit Points	52
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Weapons: sword +1 (energy drain); flail

Armor: plate mail; chain mail; shield; helmet



ZARGASH™

Evil Cleric

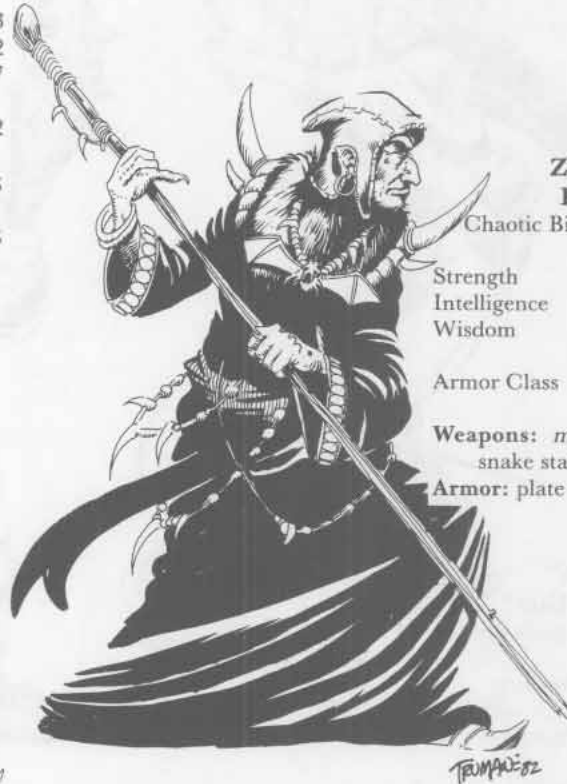
Chaotic Bishop (7th level cleric)

Strength	8	Dexterity	10
Intelligence	10	Constitution	10
Wisdom	15	Charisma	16

Armor Class	2	Hit Points	38
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Weapons: mace +1; war hammer; snake staff

Armor: plate mail; shield; helmet



KELEK™

Evil Sorcerer*

Chaotic Sorcerer (7th level magic-user)

Strength	15	Dexterity	10
Intelligence	15	Constitution	14
Wisdom	13	Charisma	7

Armor Class	9	Hit Points	33
-------------	---	------------	----

Weapons: dagger +1; wand of cold (5 charges left); staff of striking (12 charges left)

Armor: ring of protection +1

Additional Languages: Orc

Spellbook:

First level: charm person, magic missile, read magic, shield, sleep

Second level: ESP, knock, mirror image, web

Third level: fireball, fly, haste

Fourth level: charm monsters



WARDUKE™

Evil Fighter*

Chaotic Superhero (8th level fighter)

Strength	16	Dexterity	11
Intelligence	9	Constitution	14
Wisdom	11	Charisma	11

Armor Class	2	Hit Points	59
-------------	---	------------	----

Weapons: sword +1 (flames on command); battle axe; dagger

Armor: plate mail; shield; magical helmet (infravision 60 feet, causes wearer's eyes to glow red)





SKYLLA™

Evil Magic-User*

Chaotic Warlock (6th level magic-user)

Strength	9	Dexterity	11
Intelligence	12	Constitution	10
Wisdom	15	Charisma	11

Armor Class	9	Hit Points	22
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Weapons: dagger +1; staff of commanding (10 charges left)

Armor: ring of protection +1

Spellbook:

First level: charm person, floating disc, light, magic missile, read magic

Second level: detect invisible, knock, levitate, wizard lock

Third level: hold person, lightning bolt



ZORGAR™

Evil Barbarian*

Chaotic Swashbuckler (5th level fighter)

Strength	18	Dexterity	13
Intelligence	10	Constitution	16
Wisdom	9	Charisma	12

Armor Class	5	Hit Points	37
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Weapons: dagger +1; club

Armor: chain mail



DREX™

Evil Warrior*

Chaotic Myrmidon (6th level fighter)

Strength	15	Dexterity	14
Intelligence	9	Constitution	11
Wisdom	10	Charisma	10

Armor Class	6	Hit Points	39
-------------	---	------------	----

Weapons: sword +1; dagger

Armor: leather +1; shield; helmet



ZARAK™

Evil Half-Orc Assassin*

Chaotic Cutpurse (5th level thief)

Strength	13	Dexterity	12
Intelligence	11	Constitution	16
Wisdom	15	Charisma	6

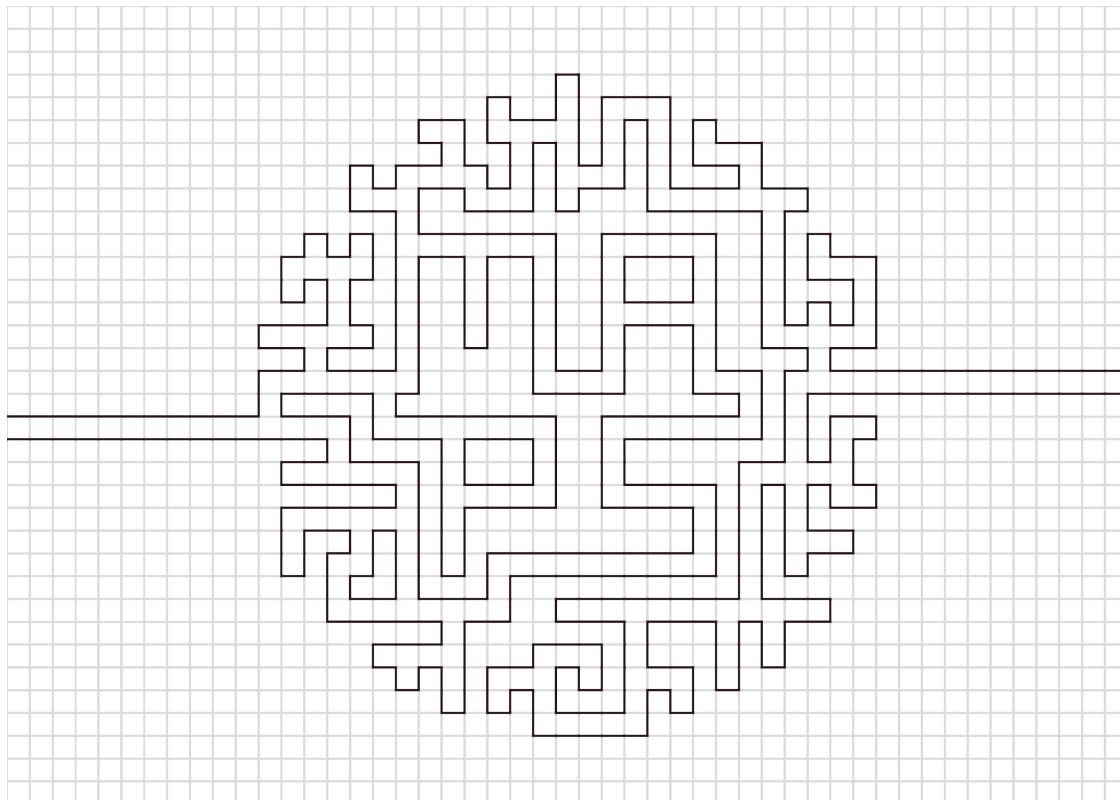
Armor Class	7	Hit Points	27
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Weapons: throwing dagger +1 with magical returning (boomerang) ability

Armor: leather; potion of invisibility

Maps (and Art) of the Month

Whether it's the search for a lost mining settlement, a journey through mist-filled domains, or even a pleasant visit to the local carnival—we've got the maps for you!



*WARNING: THESE MAPS MAY CONTAIN SPOILERS FOR
CANDLEKEEP MYSTERIES, VAN RICHTEN'S GUIDE TO
RAVENLOFT, AND THE WILD BEYOND THE WITCHLIGHT*

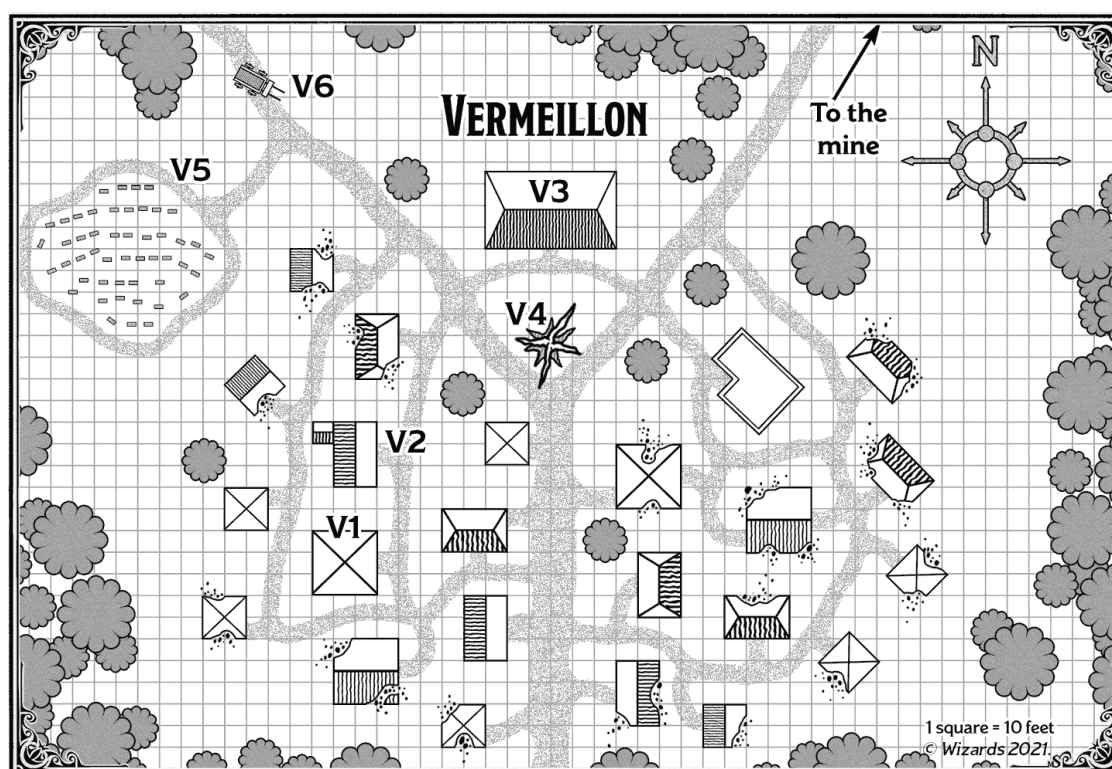
CANDLEKEEP MYSTERIES

With its extensive adventure content set in that vastest of libraries, we're providing further resources to help Dungeon Masters run games taking place within the walls of Candlekeep.

This issue, you'll find maps and illustrations for the adventure *A Deep and Creeping Darkness*. In this encounter for 4th-level characters, one of Candlekeep's books describes a mining disaster that prompts a renewed search for a missing village. A tale of tragedy and terror, the book presents a series of vignettes collected from "those who were there": namely the survivors, traveling merchants, and residents of nearby settlements.

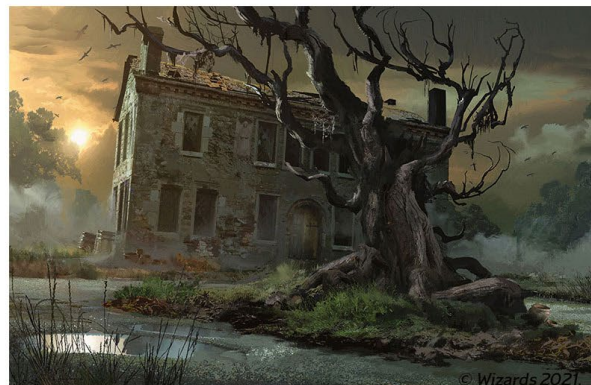
Their stories are grim, indeed. In the wake of this calamity, another horror plagued the village as its people began to disappear... starting with the disaster's survivors.

Written by Sarah Madsen, you can [read our interview](#) with her from a previous issue of *Dragon+*.



(Select to view)

MAP 1 TAGGED
 MAP 1 UNTAGGED
 MAP 2 TAGGED
 MAP 2 UNTAGGED
 MAP 3 TAGGED
 MAP 3 UNTAGGED



(Select to view)

ART ZIP FILE

Candlekeep Mysteries is available now from your **local game store**, bookstores such as **Barnes & Noble**, **Books-a-Million**, or online at retailers such as **Amazon**. A digital edition is also available at **D&D Beyond**, **Fantasy Grounds**, and **Roll20**.

VAN RICHTEN'S GUIDE TO RAVENLOFT

In our **previous issue**, we offered floorplans for this book's introductory adventure, *House of Lament*. We've now expanded our scope of material from *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft* to include overland maps for a few of its Domains of Dread. You might find them useful for your Ravenloft campaigns, or even untagged for use as treasure maps in any game!

Falkovnia: With cudgel and pike, the soldiers of Falkovnia force every commoner into grueling labor, rushing them to raise fortifications and scrape scrawny roots from the dirt. Every lash strike, every day of meager rations is necessary—or so the soldiers claim—because time is short and the dead are coming.



(Select to view)

TAGGED
UNTAGGED

Hazlan: In Hazlan, magic is authority, justification for any excess, and—for those without any magical ability—the specter of inevitable doom. This Domain of Dread is less a nation than a vast magical laboratory, whose wizard overlord Hazlik views every being as either an apprentice or a test subject.



(Select to view)

TAGGED
UNTAGGED

Lamordia: Life is cheap in Lamordia. As far as the land's esteemed scholars are concerned, the spark that animates flesh is merely the result of chemical accidents and the proper formulas. Golems, homunculi, and other constructed beings groan to life to support a populace desperate to survive in this frigid realm.



(Select to view)

TAGGED
UNTAGGED

Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft is available now at your **local game store**, bookstores such as **Barnes & Noble**, **Books-a-Million**, or online at retailers such as **Amazon**. A digital edition is also available at **D&D Beyond**, **Fantasy Grounds**, and **Roll20**.

THE WILD BEYOND THE WITCHLIGHT

The Witchlight Carnival is “a fairground of kaleidoscopic tents and wagons crewed by wondrous beings, including many denizens of the Feywild. This is no ordinary carnival; it uses magic to travel from world to world across the Material Plane, visiting each world once every eight years and setting up business on the outskirts of populated areas. The carnival spends a few days at each location, then packs up and moves to another location on the same world until the decision is made to leave that world and visit the next.”

Your characters should explore the carnival as they please. There are many paths through it, so a map to the fairgrounds may come in handy.



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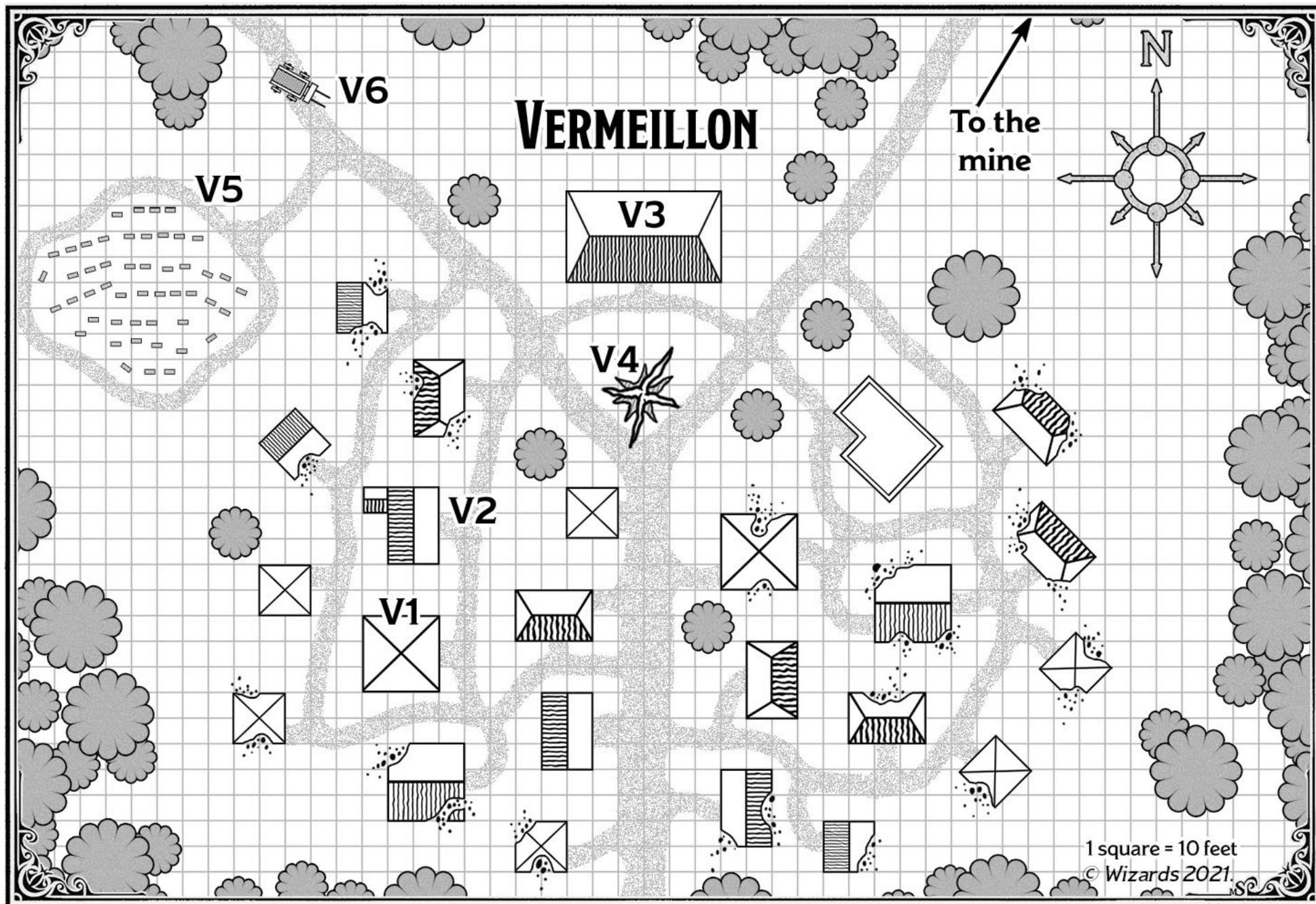
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The Wild Beyond the Witchlight is available now at your **local game store**, bookstores such as **Barnes & Noble**, **Books-a-Million**, or online at retailers such as **Amazon**. A digital edition is also available at **D&D Beyond** and **Roll20**.

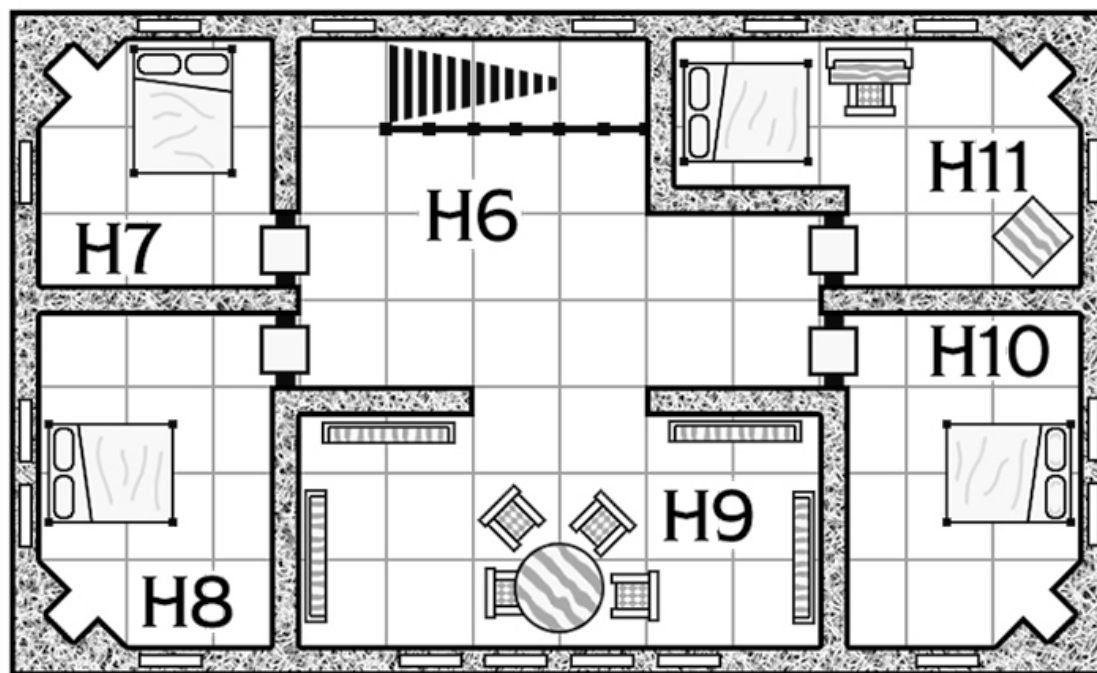
CARTOGRAPHERS

As always, our appreciation goes out to our amazing cartographers from *Candlekeep Mysteries*, *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*, and *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight*. These artists include Stacey Allan, Francesca Baerald, Jared Blando, Tim Hartin, Dyson Logos, Sean Macdonald, Mike Schley, and Will Doyle.

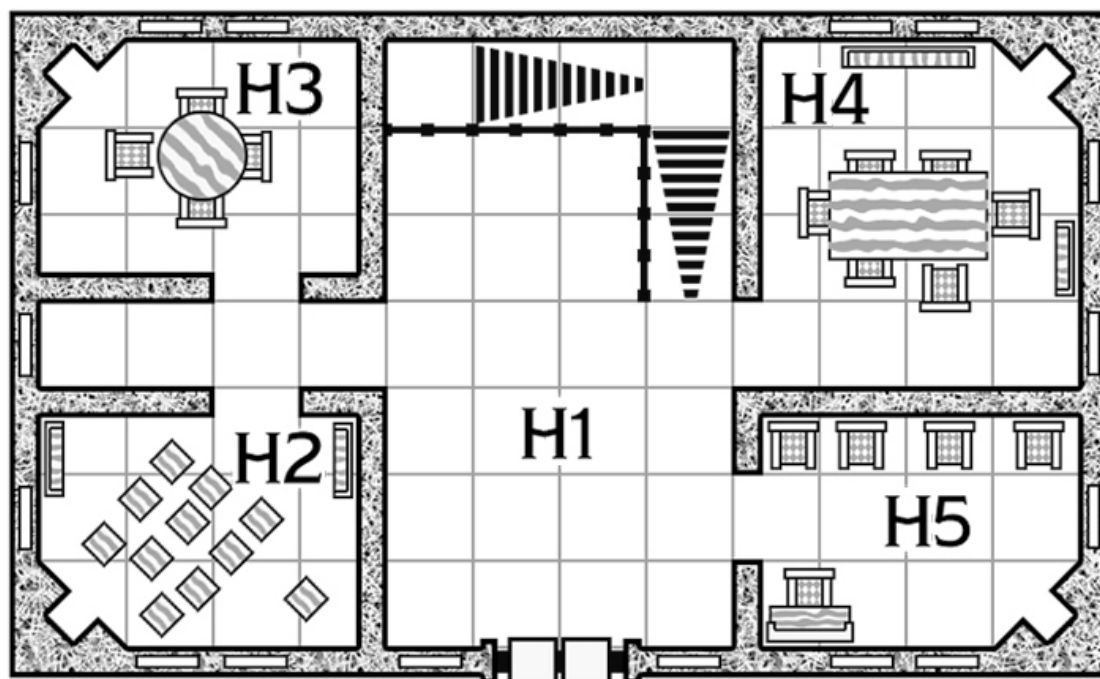
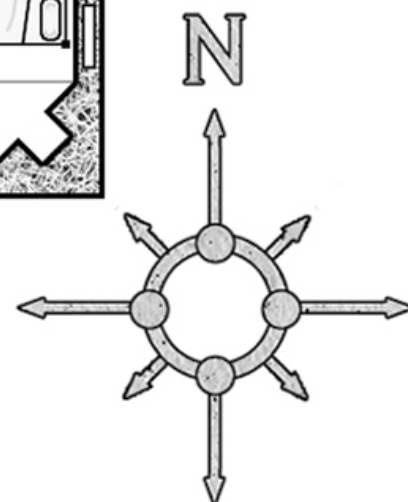
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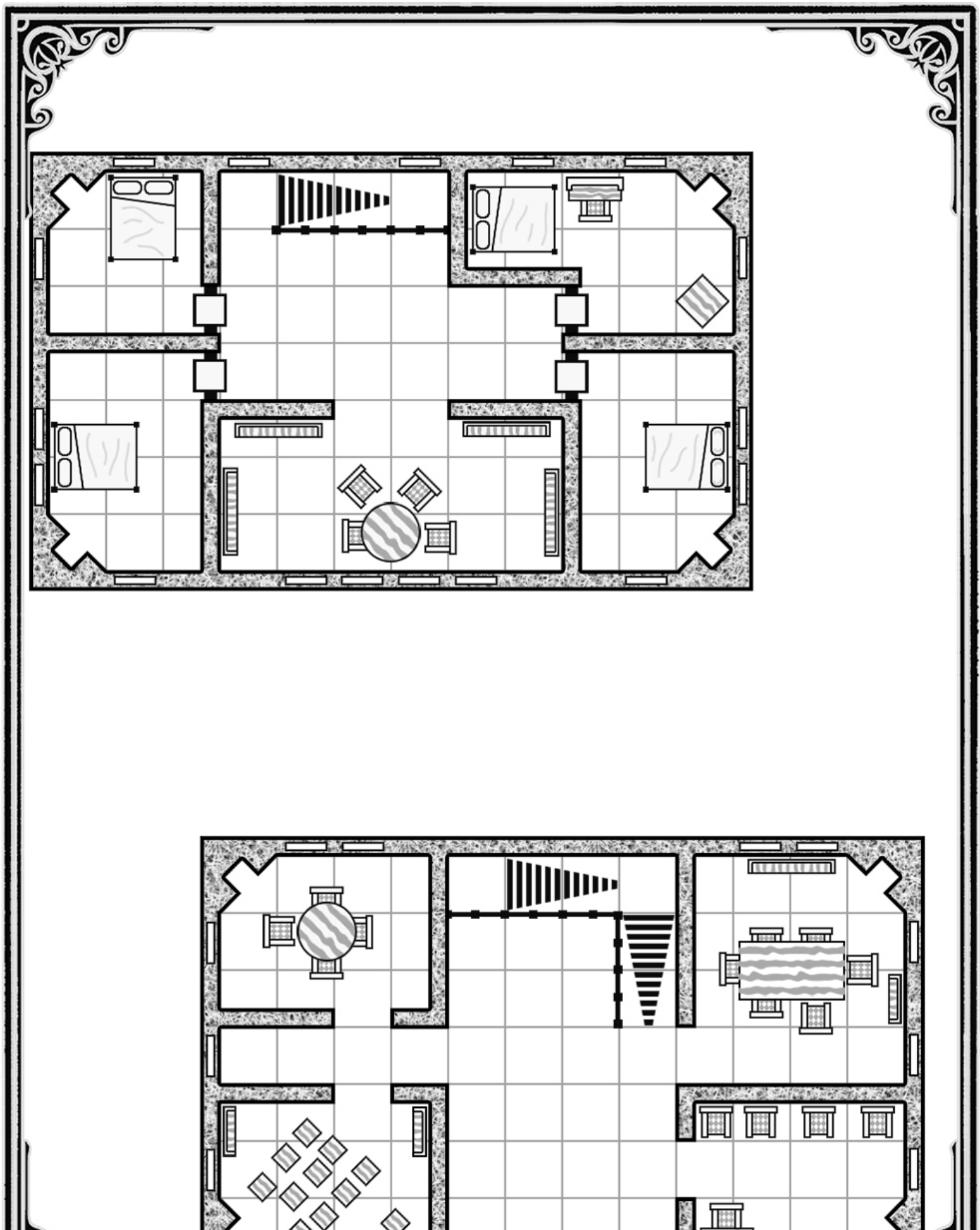
MAYOR DUVEZIN'S HOUSE

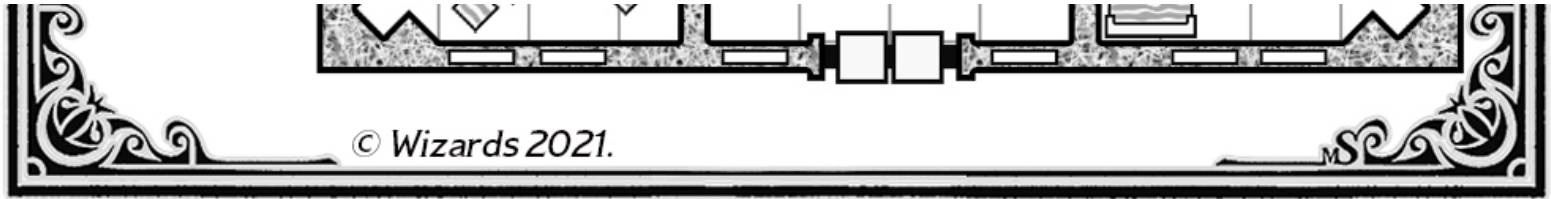


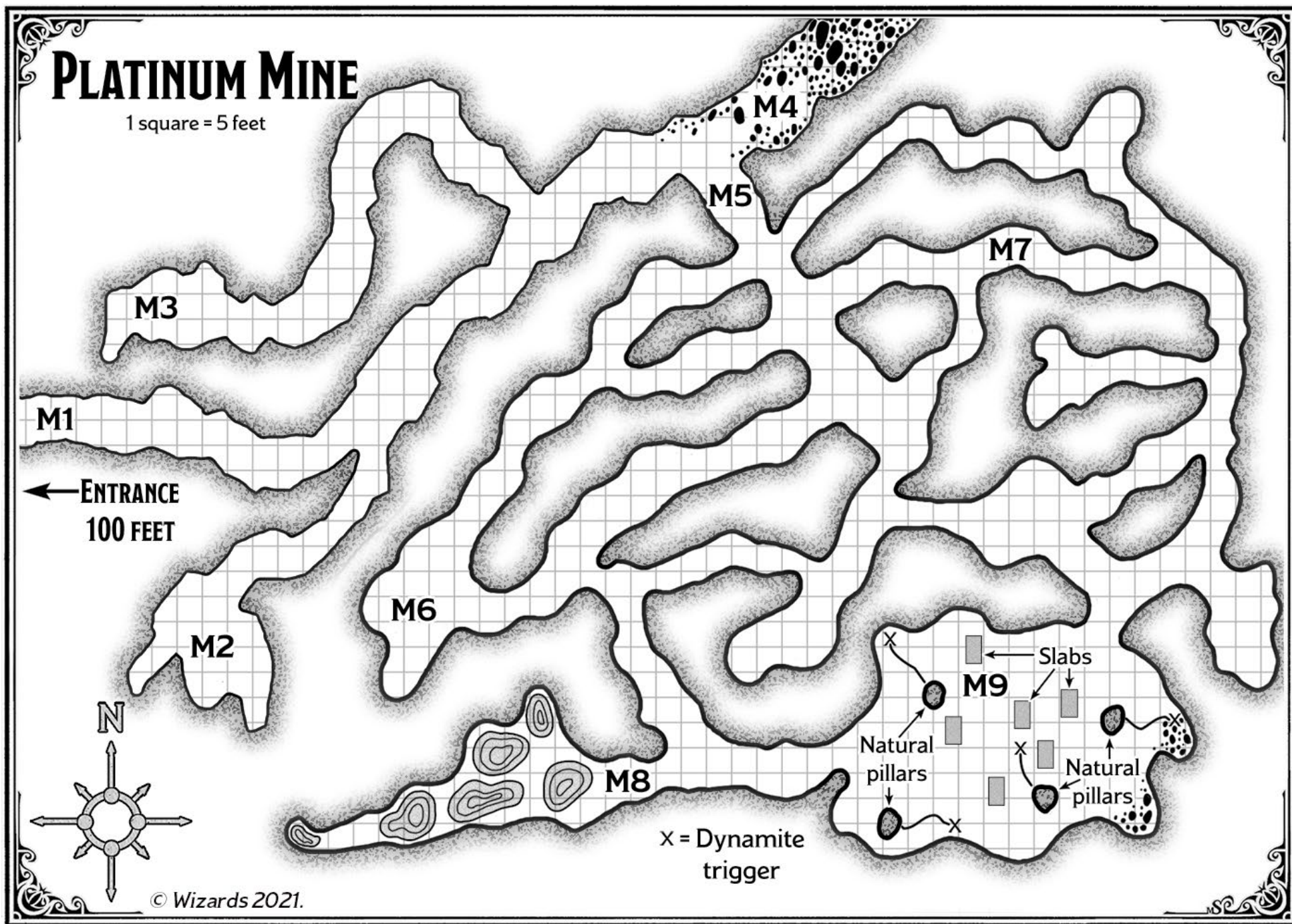
UPPER FLOOR

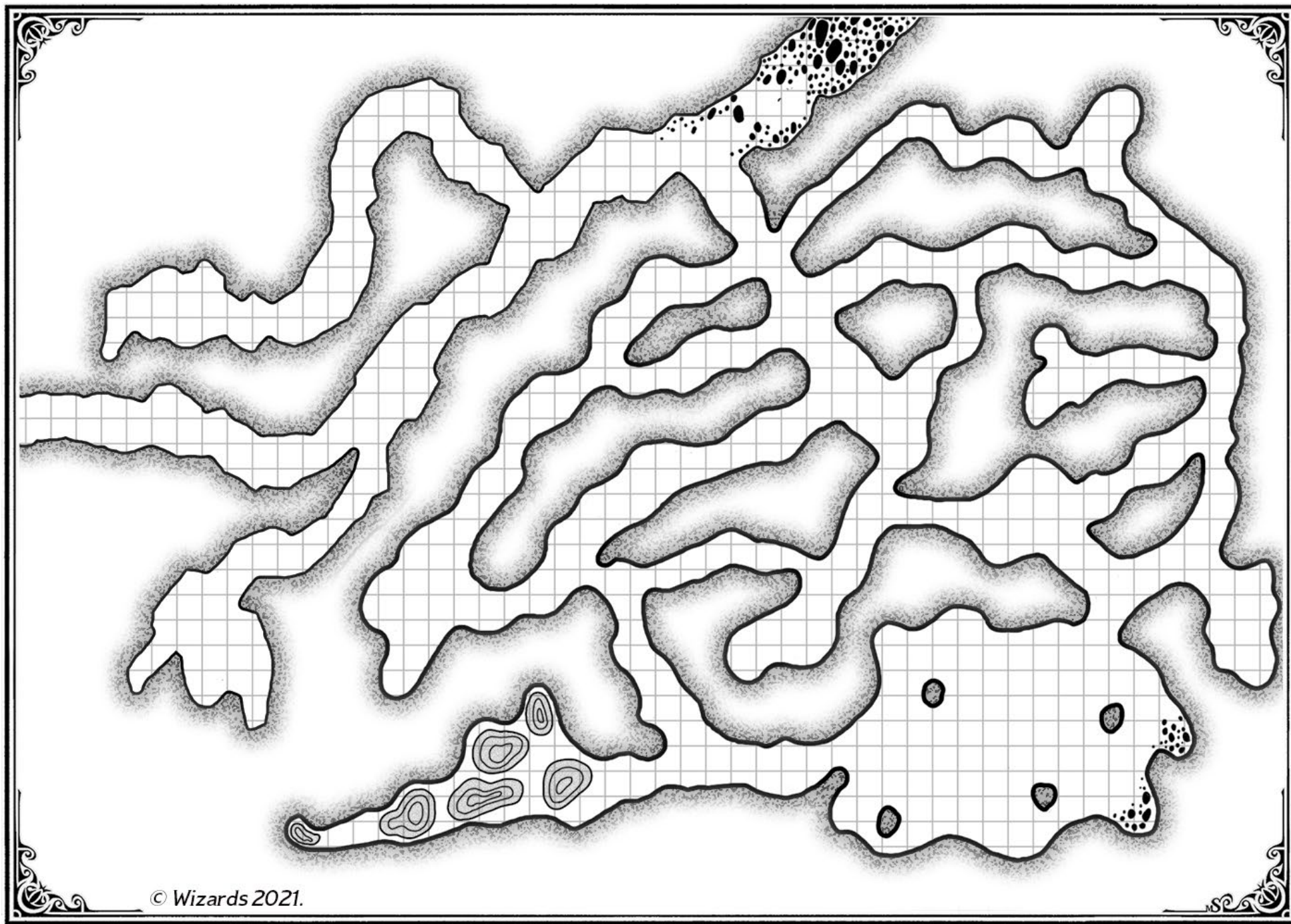












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Community Poll: Dragon Hoard Trinkets

Revealing items that have gained new powers after absorbing the magic of dragons.

*F*izban's *Treasury of Dragons* is about to show that there's no area of the world's greatest roleplaying game that isn't touched by these incredible, winged beasts. Because once you begin to measure the impact these scaly creatures have on Dungeons & Dragons—their inclusion in that name being entirely apt—you realize they influence every facet of the game.

While one of the most iconic ways adventurers traditionally encounter dragons is when trying to secure the goodies found within their fabled hoards, even that interaction has been enhanced in this upcoming sourcebook. Project Lead James Wyatt previously revealed that items found in a dragon's hoard may now be treated in an unusual way.

“One new concept we introduce is hoard items,” **James tells *Dragon+***. “These are magic items that become more powerful when they're steeped in a dragon's hoard. If you find an item in a blue wyrmling's hoard, for example, and then several levels later you use that item to kill an adult red dragon and you steep it in that hoard, it may become more powerful because it's the hoard of an adult dragon. The item might also change its characteristics slightly, because it's been affected by a red dragon's magic instead of a blue dragon.”

We asked the D&D social media audience for their suggestions of fun or unusual trinkets that might be found in a hoard, which might also have benefitted from the dragon's magic rubbing off on them. Our selection of your favorite answers appears below, with a few of those being brought to life by **artist Mark Mitchell**.

You can also check out our previous ***Community Poll*** detailing the rare and unusual books you might find in a library in celebration of ***Candlekeep Mysteries***, as well as your suggestions for **chilling items** littering the Domains of Dread based on the horror trinkets found in ***Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft***.

A tiny bell, made of pearlescent quartz and with a clapper of gold.

When struck, it rings with an enormous sound.

Alexander D.



(Select to view)

An assortment of magical armor that has become sentient due to the magic energy, fire, and presence of a dragon over hundreds of years.

Todd K.

A battered old dragon teddy bear. One of the ears is well chewed and an eye is hanging out, but it has the dopest smile on its face and is clearly very well loved.

Mira M.

A gilded fork carved in the likeness of a knight's armored sleeve.

Over time in the hoard, the handle has become scaled and the fork's hue has changed to that of the dragon.

Marcello

A golden cookie cutter in the form of a chest.

Nise F.

The scorched remains of a bag of holding. This damaged item barely functions (DC10 Dexterity check to retrieve the item you want) and still seems to contain a few items belonging to the incinerated thief who brought it to the dragon's lair. The first time you roll a critical success when retrieving an item from the bag, you instead pull out a minor magic item to be randomly decided by the DM.

Hexplorers

A single gold coin in the horde has the power to grant a wish when thrown into a well. But which one?

One DM to Another

Old books and journals the dragon collected. The magic that enchants the hoard brings their stories to life, creating illusions based on their words and illustrations.

Al S.

A silver cornet that resists tarnish, and with practice can replicate the trumpeting roars of the host dragon.

GrokMonkey

A long sword that has been used as a toothpick by an ancient dragon for centuries. The great wyrm's toothpick has gained sentience over time and thinks itself a dental expert. It deals an additional d8 damage of the dragon's type and provides advantage on Medicine checks that involve either the mouth or dragons.

Davey J.

A simple-looking ladle. If you eat food dished out with this implement, your next burp shoots the same type of dragon breath as the hoard's creator.

Paul K.

A carved wooden whistle that used to look like a frog and make a frog call when blown. It has slowly morphed over its years in the hoard to look more like a dragon and sometimes sounds with a loud draconic roar instead when used.

Emma H.

A small, golden pig statue that responds to the greed of the individual carrying it. The greedier their thoughts, the heavier it gets.

Sandie H.

A mirror that occasionally allows the user to see out of a different, random mirror somewhere else in this world.

Mac N. C.

A ring of mysterious keys.

Big Kitty Paints

A jar that fills itself once a day with duck-stuffing dumplings.

Ziemowit Ż.

A +1 sentient great axe that insults the wielder when they attack.

Steven T.

A fine fur cloak with an intact animal head on the collar/shoulder.

Prolonged exposure to the magic of the hoard makes this head blink and yawn from time to time.

John D.



(Select to view)

A chessboard wrought of mother of pearl and obsidian. The figures are all vaguely draconic and some look a little scorched!

Mira M.

A compass of gold detection, which points in the direction of the largest mass of gold multiplied by the square root of the distance. This cursed item slowly infects the user with an addiction for gold acquisition.

Rebecca Louise G.

Any standard piece of equipment that has become sentient. It gives advice, and then insults the player's choice if they don't take that advice, saying things such as "If you'd listened to me, we'd have caught up by now" and "I told you not to pull that lever."

Mike K.

A magically enthused greatclub. The featherweight club can only be used easily by someone with a strength of 10 or less. The club feels like it weighs 200 pounds if anyone stronger tries to lift it.

Cara N.

*A portable hole full of **skeletons**, dropped by a deceased necromancer. The skeletons have become infused with the type of energy associated with the dragon.*

Ken S.

A wooden toy dragon of almost no value, which the dragon loved. Over time the magic of the hoard has made it look like a perfect wooden replica of the dragon, and turned it into an intelligent enchanted toy with a personality very similar to the hoard's owner.

Jefferson H.

A magical weapon that displays anxiety when its wielder has no gold coins.

Trey W.

A tiny metal puzzle that turns the person who solves it (DC 14 Intelligence check) invisible for 1d6 minutes.

Grace W.

Cursed leg anklets that slowly turn the wearer more draconic in a cosmetic way over a long period of time.

Dion Jay W.

An ordinary-looking sack that has gained the ability to make its contents weigh a quarter of their weight if they are precious metals, allowing adventurers to carry more gold than usual. Other items weigh the same when placed inside.

Marc E.

An ancient gold coin that has gained sentience and can speak. It has been buried in the horde for so long it professes extreme gratitude to be taken away and begs its new owners not to put it in a sack or add it to their pouches. The coin is now terrified of the dark and screams

in terror if pocketed. The coin claims to know further 'secrets' about the dragon and its treasure, although this leverage may be a ploy to help it to stay out of the bag.

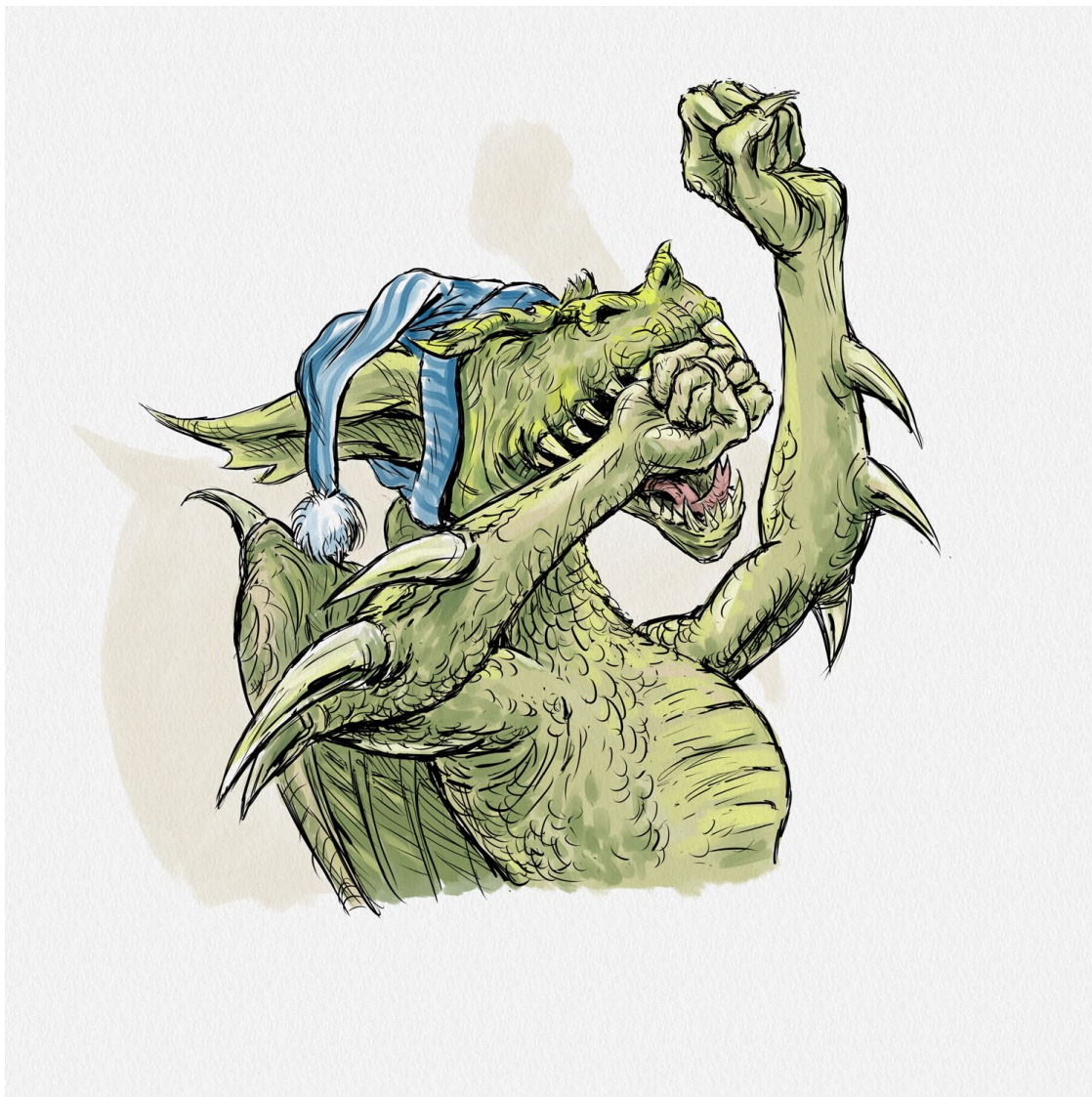
Matt W.

Cursed boots of loud noise, and everyone but the wearer can hear the noise they're making.

Will A.

An oversized nightcap with ear holes cut out and a singed tassel.

Mira M.



(Select to view)

An ancient hoard that has gained sentience over time. A particular crown or helmet within the pile acts as the “brain” that controls this entity, which can draw on the powers of any magical items within it.

Cam D.

A collection of sending stones to keep in touch with all the beings that work for the dragon. They’re neatly stacked in shelves, all labeled perfectly. But storing that many sending stones together in one place means the connection lines can overlap and sometimes you hear two people at once.

Lauren O.

An ornate candelabra full of fat, black-and-red candles that burn brightly. Unless you have the requisite snuffer, which is in this hoard somewhere, the flames will never die.

Mira M.

The broken hilt and blade of a longsword that’s become haunted by its paladin wielder, who died trying to slay the dragon. If the sword is reforged using scales taken from the dragon, it becomes a magic sword of the DM’s choosing.

Tim W.

Fizban’s Treasury of Dragons releases October 19, 2021 and is available for pre-order now at your **local game store**, bookstores such as **Barnes & Noble**, and **Books-a-Million**, or online at retailers such as Amazon. A digital version is also available at **D&D Beyond**, and **Roll20**.



BACK TO TOP



Amanda Hamon

Our introduction to members of the D&D Team and their roles continues with the Senior Designer.

The D&D Team relishes the opportunity to work on the world's greatest roleplaying game. And we're also aware there are a fair number of folks interested in learning more about entering the gaming industry professionally.

With that in mind, each issue we'll chat with D&D staff from a



diverse set of roles to find out how they came to be valued members of our party, while learning what advice they have for someone who might be looking to follow a similar path. Senior Designer Amanda Hamon follows **Chris Tulach**, **Brandy Camel**, **Dan Tovar**, **Brian Perry**, and **Shawn Wood** into our *zone of truth*.

Where in Faerûn or the wider multiverse do you hail from?

I originally grew up in a very small town in Northwest Ohio. I went to Eastern Michigan University, which is right outside Ann Arbor. Although it's only a few hours away from Northwest Ohio, there's a very big difference between the two. The small town I grew up in is very rural, with lots of cornfields and cows, while the university has a much more urban, cosmopolitan, liberal arts atmosphere. I got a degree in journalism and my professional background is in that field. I worked for the *Ann Arbor News* as a reporter, as well as newspapers such as the *Defiance Crescent-News* in Ohio, before working for the *Indianapolis Star* for a short period of time after I graduated. I worked for the *Lafayette Journal & Courier* for a couple of years after that.

What is your character class?

I'm a Senior Designer in the D&D Studio. That means I oversee projects as a book lead. I'm the one directing all the traffic, from the book outline to content creation, getting those words edited and stitched together. I work with other members of staff and especially our principals, Jeremy Crawford and Chris Perkins, to make sure that everything is aligned.

When did you first play D&D?

I've been fascinated with fantasy from a young age. But as a teenager growing up in a small town, I had limited access to resources such as the printed products. I was invited to play with a friend who had a basement full of D&D books, including some second edition, a lot of

third edition, and a few early 3.5 books. Going over to his place and looking through these books for the first time, I was in awe of what this game allows you to do. I love narrative and I love writing, so I naturally love creating worlds and stories.

What character background led to you getting the job?

Having graduated with a university degree in journalism, and a minor in creative writing, I was convinced that I would struggle to get a job because of the massive cuts being made across the newspaper industry. With that in mind, I got a full-time job as a reporter at the *Ann Arbor News* while I was still in university finishing the last two years of my degree. During a subsequent fellowship at the *Indianapolis Star*, the paper suffered a round of cuts and wasn't hiring so I was offered a role at their sister paper, the



(The Ann Arbor News building)

Lafayette Journal & Courier. After a couple of years there, I decided journalism was not the long-term career that I wanted. I realized if I'm not going to stay in newspapers forever, I should try to put my skills to use in something that I really enjoy.

What made you want to join this party?

By being an editor and a writer, and having trained as a journalist—covering beats ranging from municipal government and regional real estate to state government and health and science—I had accumulated a lot of skills in a very short space of time. I love RPGs. I started playing them when I was about 15 or 16 years old and I realized I could probably be a pretty good RPG editor. After all, roleplaying games use books with words on their pages, and someone has to edit those words. And I thought it was probably easier to get my foot in the door as an editor than it would be as a writer.

How did you first break into the tabletop RPG industry?

By the time 2011 rolled around, I had been going to Gen Con for

several years as a fan, to watch the panels and play D&D with my friends. I decided to try and foster contacts and I started handing out business cards to various companies, asking if they needed a freelance editor. I explained my skills and my love and knowledge of RPGs and I ended up meeting lots of folks, but the one who became the most pertinent to the current story is a guy named Wes Schneider.

At the time, Wes was Editor-in-Chief at Paizo and I approached him with the same spiel. Paizo wasn't hiring freelance editors but Wes asked if I would think about game design. And being trained to immediately give a response, I said, "Sure, I'd give that a shot." I followed up with him after the show and that led to an assignment from Paizo. That same year I also met Wolfgang Baur, who is head of Kobold Press, and I did a lot of freelance work for them and other companies over a period of several years.

At the time, I was working at Purdue University in internal and external communications. I never really thought that roleplaying was going to end up being a full-time job, but then a role as an Assistant Developer opened up at Paizo in 2014. I applied for it knowing that if I didn't, people would tell me I should have—but I ended up getting the job! I moved across the country to Seattle to embark upon what would become a massive shift in my life.

After about five years at Paizo, Kobold Press became extremely successful at creating RPG Kickstarters and needed to ramp up its editorial production staff. Wolfgang Baur was kind enough to bring me on to oversee the publishing arm of the company as an Editorial Director. I helped plan the Kickstarters and worked with editorial teams made up of staff and contractors to deliver those projects. We mapped out the company's long-term goals and strategies and I was planning on being there to see those through because I love the folks at Kobold and Wolfgang is a good friend of mine.

Then, the job at Wizards of the Coast opened up. Wes, who was now a Senior Designer at Wizards and one of my best friends in the world—we used to be neighbors!—said I should apply for the Senior Designer job, as did some other friends. I had only just moved to Kobold but I decided to apply so I could say that I did and we'd move on from there. And I ended up getting the job!

What's a typical session with this party like?

Everything we do on the D&D Team ties into our long-term schedule, so it depends on what period we're currently in. If we're in the initial design phase of a book, then there are usually a lot of very granular things to look at.

For example, I might be working on the Relationships subsystem for *Strixhaven: A Curriculum of Chaos* and need to get a draft of that to Jeremy Crawford so that he can give me his comments. While he's looking at that, I might also be working on the Jobs and the Extracurriculars Strixhaven students can engage in, or be looking at an adventure written by a freelancer so that I can start to give them feedback.

There are a lot of different pieces to work on depending on what stage we're at, and I'm constantly shifting to make sure that everything comes together in the timeframe.



Is multiclassing required?

Every Senior Designer is different and the elements we personally enjoy often drive what we focus on. I consider myself first and foremost an adventure writer; I've written dozens of adventures, anywhere from 96-page modules all the way down to 16-page one-shots for conventions, so I wrote a lot of the adventures for *Strixhaven: A Curriculum of Chaos*. However, another project lead

might consider themselves more adept at editing or working with artists, graphic designers, or with a cartographer.

Regardless, there is a lot of multiclassing because you've got to be a great writer, a good editor, and a good developer. You have to take these developmental manuscripts from different writers and stitch them together so they have a cohesive voice. You've got to be good at all of that and be a good layout artist, which was a new skill for me. You need a good visual and physical grasp of what will fit on the page. And you also have to be a good art director, in the sense that you have to understand how to write briefs when you're ordering the art, in order to get what you need from an artist.

How can people interested in this kind of role level up?

I've been playing RPGs since I was a teenager, but in the beginning that was somehow always separate from my professional pursuits of writing and editing. Now, though, I have managed to create a career out of tabletop RPG games when I really only intended to make money doing something that I liked, without ever thinking there might be a future in it.

A really important thing to realize is that there's no such thing as a game design degree. People who work in game design are in that field because they love it and they knew that's what they wanted to do with their careers. They might have come from any background. I've worked with creatives from all across the spectrum, including a former archaeologist, several former teachers, a former architect, and someone who had worked in food service. Everyone brings a different background and perspective and that's what makes this industry so vibrant.

An editorial background is still a viable approach to getting into TTRPGs, though. If you're professional and you learn the skills, understand things such as house style guides, rules, and publishing conventions, and have a good grasp of basic knowledge such as how deadlines work, you've got a chance. Approaching it from a business perspective worked for me. I asked myself, 'What companies am I interested in working for?' Then I made sure to meet those folks at conventions and gave out business cards.

There are also a slew of little publishing houses creating products on

the DMs Guild, so there is work out there for people who are not yet established in the industry. If you want to join the industry, seek that out and build up your resume and skillset, because to open those doors you need to set yourself apart as a professional person who people like to work with.

The landscape of the professional TTRPG is already different than it was when I got into it, and it's not even been that long! Since I joined, online streaming has become an entirely new field. This is a circle of people who are delivering new audiences and interacting with them in a way I never did when I was first getting started. Building up an online audience can be a great way to break in as the worlds of streaming and publishing already cross. We have a number of streamers who were really steeped in the D&D world who now write for us. Sometimes they wrote here and there for other companies and were brought to our attention. It's another way to get into this field.

What do you like best about this party role?

I was given so much creative freedom when writing adventures for *Strixhaven: A Curriculum of Chaos*. Of course, I was given the world guide for Strixhaven and brought up to speed on what was in the relevant *Magic: The Gathering* set. I was told how many pages I had to work with, but other than that, the adventures could include whatever I wanted. I thought there might be ideas that I put in front of the team that would earn the response, 'No, we don't do that.' But every time I told people what I was planning, the response was almost exclusively, 'That sounds amazing! Please show us the draft?' I really can't wait to see what people think of them.



Which of your footprints would be visible even under the influence of *pass without trace*?

I worked at Paizo from 2015 until 2020. I ended up being a member of the design team for *Starfinder*, which is a science fantasy, far-future RPG that's based on *Pathfinder*, but with its own ruleset. That helped launch my career as a game designer as I was so focused on system design. *Starfinder* made a big splash at Gen Con and was more successful than the company expected, which led to a desire from the fan base for more products. We quickly assembled a team to create supplements and support the game and I became manager of that team. I was then in charge of all of the *Starfinder* product lines that Paizo produced, including the rules hardcovers, the adventure paths, the map packs, and a bunch of accessory products.

Which figure gives you inspiration?

Wes Schneider is the one who hired me at Paizo and he was my first boss in this industry. He also started out as a big fan of RPGs—he's a huge Ravenloft fan and loves gothic horror, as do I—and he also made his own career happen. I've always looked at the amazing things he's done and by and large tried to follow a similar path. Earlier in my tabletop career I would think, 'Wes did it this way, so I'm going to do it this way, too.'

What are your downtime activities?

I play D&D! Especially with quarantine and lockdown as all of my games shifted online. Weirdly, even though I wasn't physically seeing people, I was actually playing and hanging out with people

even more than before. I jump between being over committed and having too many games on the go at once, to having just one game a week. I play a lot of RPGs across all different systems and as part of that I've played in and run lots of D&D games. One of my groups has been playing **Adventurers League** scenarios in between the story arcs of our main game. My boyfriend and I also play a lot of co-op video games together.

What's your coolest artifact?



The **Red Dragon Figurine of Adorable Power**. The Wizards office is this dragon's hoard of swag and awesome memorabilia. One day, I walked into the office and there was a whole bunch of Figurines of Adorable Power sitting in one of the back rooms. Bill Benham saw me and said, 'Here you go.' Obviously, I love dragons because I work on Dungeons & Dragons, but my love

of fantasy goes way, way, back. It really started when my mom read *The Hobbit* to me, when I was in the second or third grade. I still remember all the descriptions of Bilbo, Gandalf, Gollum, and the hero's journey, which, of course, we now know is this really powerful archetype. But being a child and hearing that for the first time, with all the descriptions of how scary Smaug is, I was immersed in that experience. This is my Smaug and I keep him on my desk.

You can hear more from Amanda Hamon and connect with her on **Twitter.**

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A big thank you to everyone who tried out for the inaugural Dungeon Masters Challenge!

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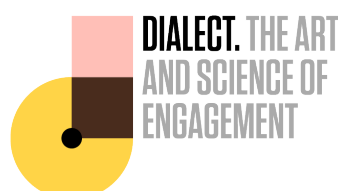
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You gain inspiration! Check out our guide to help you roll a natural 20 on your holiday gift giving!



In our next exciting edition of *Dragon+*, we'll help you handpick the perfect presents for the Dungeons & Dragons fans in your life. From cool dice to hot jewelry, our mythically monstrous gift guide will have something for everyone this holiday season. We'll also have plenty of goodies of our own to share!



Even before you turn the first page of our digital magazine, we'll have a treat for your eyes. Illustrator Tim Probert, whose art graces the children's novel *Dungeon Academy: No Humans Allowed!*, brings that book's characters spectacularly to life on our cover. Inside, we'll also chat with the book's author Madeleine Roux about her D&D adventure set in a school that trains monsters

There'll be more incredible NPCs for you to drop directly into your game, thanks to Adam Lee and Max Dunbar's continuing collaboration in Character Spotlight. Expect unique non-

player characters with bags of personality that will feel right at home in your adventures in the Feywild. Plus, we'll consider some

incredible Extra Life projects, and meet this year's inaugural Dungeon Master Challenge winner!

Issue #40 also includes another delve into the imposing *Dragon* archive, all the recent streaming highlights, more free, downloadable locations (and art!) in our *Maps of the Month* column, and much, *much* more!

(Contents subject to change)



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